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VILLAGE BELLES.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

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VILLAGE BELLES.

CHAPTER I.

A FETE CHAMPETRE.

WHETHER Rosina's tears originated in a little remorse, a little repentance, a little love, a little agitation at the unequivocal nature of Lewis's language, or a little unsteadiness of spirits occasioned by the heat, the fatigue of walking, and a mixture of all the above mentioned emotions together, it may be difficult to determine; but as no time could be worse chosen for weeping than the epoch of a fête champêtre, her eyes were speedily dried, and she walked forward without casting "one lingering look behind." The space which she had to traverse before reaching her sister and the Goods might be about half a quarter of a mile; which, let her pace it as leisurely as she

might, allowed no great time for composing the perturbation of her looks and feelings. "If I could but follow Lewis's example," thought she as she wiped away her tears, "and run home! But that would never do—Hannah would be frightened; and what would the Goods, and the Hollands, and the Browns, and Mr. Huntley think?—Ten to one, they would guess the truth, and I should never hear the end of it. My mother, too, would find all out immediately. After all, why should I be the least concerned about what has passed? Lewis has behaved very ill. I will go through with it with spirit."

In pursuance of this noble resolution, Rosina walked on, trusting that the open air would destroy the traces of her tears, but, to avoid all danger, holding her parasol between herself and Mr. Good, though the sun shone in an opposite direction.

"Heyday, Rosina!" shouted Mr. Good as soon as she came within hail, "what have you done with your beau?"

Rosina did not think it necessary to scream in return, but as soon as she arrived within speaking distance, she replied with tolerable carelessness,

"Lewis said he had a bad headache, which would make the noise and gaiety of the party too much for him, so he went home."

"Upon my word! The oddest thing I ever heard of in my life, to leave a young lady to find her own way through a wood! It does not speak very highly of Mr. Pennington's politeness. I hope this headache is not a mere sham, to cover something worse."

"I thought Lewis seemed unwell before we set out," said Hannah; "he looked flushed, and spoke more hurriedly than usual."

"So he did," said Mrs. Good. "Oh, he would hardly have left Rosina in this abrupt way if he had not really felt unwell. Nothing is more unpleasant than a sick headache when one is expected to be merry and talkative."

"Well," said Mr. Good, "we must not loiter here any longer at all events, or we shall arrive at the fag end of the dinner, and I am one of those who love 'the latter end of a fray and the beginning of a feast.'"

He offered his arm to his wife as he spoke, and the two sisters followed together. Hannah had detected the traces of emotion on Rosina's counte-

nance, but she forbore at present, to make any inquiry. It struck her that she and Lewis had most likely had a little quarrel, and she was sorry for it, but doubted not that all would be set right again at their next meeting. Hannah had long been only able to guess at what passed in her sister's mind, and she had little suspicion of its being wholly occupied by thoughts of Mr. Huntley.

Mrs. Good, whose figure was rather more than embonpoint, began to complain of the heat.

"My dear," said her husband, "for your comfort, there are some good, substantial-looking clouds coming up in the south, which exceedingly remind me of my first water-colour piece when I was a schoolboy—'Storm coming on'—My stars! if it should rain!—What will become of your new bonnet?"

"Don't put disagreeable thoughts into my head, my dear," returned Mrs. Good, gaily. "When the rain actually comes, it will be time enough to think of my bonnet."

"You are quickening your pace, however, on the strength of my suggestion. So, Rosina, you have been to Mrs. Shivers's, I hear, since you were

at our house, and had a delightful day. Hannah has been telling us all about it. You had an adventure too; were soused into the water, and a young gentleman jumped in after you. All this was mighty pleasant and romantic. It was lucky, however, that neither of you caught cold."

"I did take cold," said Rosina, "and only left my room this morning."

"Then I think your mother did not shew her usual prudence in sending you out to dine on the grass. However, your cold was not very bad, I'll answer for it, or you would have sent for me. Whirr! There go the partridges! I shall try to have a day's shooting this week. Is your young cousin—your Mr. Pennington much of a shot?"

"No, I think not," said Rosina, absently.

"No, he never shoots," said Hannah. "Mr. Pakenham was laughing at him for it, on Monday evening, and calling him a *Humanitarian.* I thought few young men would have borne raillery with so much steadiness and good humour."

"He could bear to be shot at then, it seems," observed Mr. Good, "and by the sharpest of weapons, the poisoned arrow of irony. Well; I like the young man the better for it—it speaks well for

him—it is what few are equal to; though as to not shooting, on the score of its being a cruel amusement, that's all nonsense. Nobody thinks any thing of it."

"Lewis would tell you," returned Hannah, "that people choose not to think of it, because, if they did, they must confess that it *is* a cruel amusement."

"Then he would talk nonsense," said Mr. Good. "Those kind of speeches make a young fellow appear very pragmatical. If Mr. Pennington chooses to run counter to established customs, he should be contented to indulge his own whims, without wanting to engraft them on other people. All that over-refinement, and making one's self out to be better than any body else, has a very priggish tendency; and I don't like a fine young man, such as Mr. Pennington, to be a prig."

Mrs. Good warmly defended Lewis from any taint of priggishness, and, before the subject was exhausted, they reached the rendezvous, where the elder Miss Hollands were busily unpacking the baskets, and settling precedence between lamb and chicken, while Phœbe and Jemima Brown were flirting with Huntley. Lewis was not missed till,

on sitting down to their pic-nic, Miss Holland exclaimed, "Where is Mr. Pennington?"

"Dear, yes! where is he?" echoed Miss Phœbe. "I declare we had quite forgotten him."

"He has made off, ladies," said Mr. Good, "without saying with your leave or by your leave —gone home in a fit of the sulks, or with a sick headache, whichever the case may be."

"Cool!" said Huntley.

"Cool? I never heard any thing so odd!" cried Miss Phœbe, "so rude, I may say! Extremely tiresome, when we have so few gentlemen."

"Oh, *you* can't pretend to miss him much, at any rate, as you owned just now you had quite forgotten him."

"Only, what with one sending an excuse, and another not coming, and another turning back, the party is quite broken up."

"And after setting out with us and all!" chimed in Miss Jemima Brown; "young men give themselves such airs now!"

"So they did in my time," said Mr. Good; "I don't think they are a bit altered."

"Well, I think they are," said Miss Holland;

"however, I dare say we shall do vastly well without Mr. Pennington."

"Dear, yes! we're quite independent of him," said Miss Phœbe, bridling. "I only wish we had asked Mr. Sam Good, instead. *He* always sets something pleasant going."

"And is not too fine for his company," added Miss Margaret.

"No, indeed. If there's anything I dislike, it's haughtiness, and what you call capriciousness,—caprice."

If these are the delights of a *fête champêtre*, thought Rosina, one may almost as well dine indoors as on the grass.

Huntley had been playing with the young Goods, and chasing them over the heath. He now ran off in his turn, followed by the children in full cry, and instead of returning to his old quarters, took refuge between the Miss Wellfords, the youngest of whom smiled complacently at the manœuvre.

"Mine was a fatiguing walk, this morning," whispered he to Rosina. "If you knew what hard work it is to play *cavalier' servente* to five

plain women at once! I shall take care to avoid such a scrape again."

Then, turning to Hannah, "What a pretty spot this is," said he, "for a *fête champêtre!* We want nothing but a guitar, some floating drapery twined through those trees, cloaks, feathered caps, and moustachios for Mr. Good and myself, and ball-dresses for the ladies, to render the whole group fit for Stothard."

"To this it might be objected," said Hannah, with a smile, "that the drapery would be utterly useless, that nobody could play on the guitar, that in ball-dresses we should infallibly catch cold, and that Mr. Good's cheerful countenance, quite in keeping with his blue coat and beaver hat, would be completely out of character with a Spanish hat and feathers."

"You do not object to *my* donning the cap and cloak, I perceive, at any rate. And how do you know that I cannot play the guitar? I *can*, I assure you. I have been a scholar of Bertolini's."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Rosina.

Huntley smiled. "If you should hear a guitar tinkling beneath your window, some night," said

he, "be sure not to suspect *me* of being the serenader."

"But indeed I shall!" she returned. "A serenade!" repeated she to herself, "how romantic! —how delightful!"

"I cannot tell," resumed Huntley to Hannah, in a lowered tone, "what makes me in such high spirits to-day! I seem at the summit of felicity—every thing wears a smile to me." Not every *body*, though, thought he, as he caught a pouting look from Miss Phœbe.

"Fine weather often makes us feel happy without our knowing why," said Hannah; "at least; it often has that effect on me. How pleasant it is to sit here in the shade, looking at the sunshine."

"Contrast, contrast,—the grand principle of enjoyment. In the shade we look for sunshine; in the parched desert, the traveller looks towards the oasis. As retirement to the statesman, so is the gaiety of London to the retired man. Did you never consider how much of our happiness depends upon contrast?"

"I think that health and sickness, prosperity and adversity, wonderfully relieve each other."

"You use the word relieve in a painter's sense," said Huntley, smiling with pleasure. "I will tell you where one powerfully feels the effect of contrast:—at Somerset House. Amid the heat, glare, and crowding of the exhibition, I have gazed with inexpressible delight on some rural landscape, which has transported me in imagination from the fashionable flutter around. I have longed to breathe the cooler air, and inhale the fragrant scents that have seemed to belong to the miniature prospect. But, sitting at our ease on some bank or rustic bench, and enjoying the variety of rural sounds around us, we are apt to fancy it is their comparative stillness, whereas it is the sense they imperceptibly convey of life and activity, which interests the mind. The twittering of busy birds, the hum of industrious bees, the running to and fro of ants, the milkmaid's call, and the mower's scythe, all bring our own luxurious idleness in pleasant contrast with others' employment."

"The salt, Mr. Huntley, if you please," said Miss Brown, in a tone which shewed that the contrast of his own idleness with others' employment was not quite pleasant to every one.

"May I have the pleasure of taking wine with you, Miss Brown?" said he, anxious to re-establish his falling character.

"You are making nothing of a dinner, Hannah," said Mr. Good. "For my part, I declare that this brisk air makes me eat

> 'As though excess of appetite did grow
> By what it fed on.'"

"I am uncommonly fond of these rustic parties," said Miss Jemima Brown, sentimentally, "they always put me in mind of Shakspeare's 'As You Like It.'"

"What, where Orlando comes in at dinner time with his sword drawn, and bids the company 'forbear and eat no more?'" said Huntley.

"Unpleasant that," said Mr. Good, taking another slice of tongue.

"It was very pretty, though, to see the duke and his court dining under the trees," said Jemima.

"Bless me, Miss Jemima, did you live in Ardennes forest in *those times?*"

"La! Mr. Good, you know I mean, at a play."

"Oh! pasteboard trees, were they? Well,

every one to their taste, but I must say that there is nothing at which I less like mere looking on, than a dinner."

"I wonder if we shall have any company at Heeley, this season," said Miss Holland.

"I hope we shall," cried Tom Good, "for papa has promised we shall go, the next time there is a play."

"Have you usually a good company?" inquired Huntley.

"Pretty fair," said Mr. Good. "I am a great friend to Thespis, and usually give the theatre the benefit of my patronage. The poor wretches are miserably fitted out, and are obliged to be actors of all work. I often see the same coat figure in tragedy, interlude, and farce, in the course of one night; and a mock ermine boa which has begun the evening as a trimming to Lady Macbeth's royal robe, has next made its appearance on the dress of a Russian countess in Love in Wrinkles, and finally encircled the neck of our Catalani."

"Alias, Mrs. Hodgkinson," said Mrs. Good.

"Tell me not of Mrs. Hodgkinson—to me they are Catalani, Braham, Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons.

I like the spirit of good nature which prevails in our little company and which makes them willing to share all things in common. That boa is actually the property of our Miss O'Neill. The sociability of these two actresses might put some greater stars to the blush."

"It is beginning to rain, I declare!" cried Jemima Brown in alarm, "I felt a great drop fall on my face."

"Alas! my wife's bonnet!" cried Mr. Good. "I laid her a wager it would be spoilt the first time she wore it. My dear, I sympathize with your feelings. Yes, the sky looks very threatening—you ladies had better get under cover. Hannah, why did you insult us by coming in a gown that would not spoil? Malicious girl! you will do nothing but laugh at the uneasiness of others. Never mind the dirty tablecloth, Fanny—Let it lie—

> 'Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
> To wash it white as snow?'"

"Your quotations from Shakspeare, Mr. Good, are certainly felicitous," said Huntley laughing.

The rain now commenced what Miss Brown termed "a regular pepper," and the ladies hastily

scudded beneath the shelter afforded by a few large trees, where, by means of shawls and umbrellas, they succeeded in securing their dresses from injury. Some little time and trouble, however, were expended in their arrangements, and a few little peeps at temper were afforded to the keen young artist.

"I declare my silk slippers will be spoilt for ever and ever," said Miss Brown.

"I told you how it would be, Harriet," said Jemima.

"There, don't put me in mind of it now. What's done, can't be undone."

"No, but some people will never be the better for experience. If this should bring on one of your attacks on the chest, now, you'll be sorry for it!"

"You have snugly housed yourselves, indeed!" said Mr. Good, rubbing his hands as he approached, and looking as merry as if nothing were the matter. "This is a famous firm dry bank, and I don't think the rain will penetrate the leaves. We will 'sit upon the ground and tell strange stories of the deaths of kings.' Come, Tom! you shall begin."

"The death of a king, papa?" said Tom with simplicity. "Will William Rufus do?"

"Extremely well, my boy," said his father, laughing.

Tom told his tale roundly, and was rewarded by the ladies' praises of his memory. Emboldened by the encouragement he had received, he pulled Mr. Huntley by the arm. "It's your turn, now," said he.

"With all my heart," said Huntley, always ready to answer an unexpected draft on his imagination. "How must I begin? In the old-fashioned way, 'once upon a time'? Did you ever hear of King Harold?"

"I should think so," said Tom proudly.

"Then 'listen, lords and ladies gay,' for I am going to tell you a very moving story."

Huntley remembered the tradition, which related that Harold did not die on the field of Hastings, but was found, the night after the battle, by his wife and a friar, who recovered him from his swoon and conveyed him to a hermitage where he remained concealed for many years. Huntley worked up these circumstances, which he imagined

Harold to divulge on his dying bed to William the Conqueror, in a very striking manner. It was just such a tale as might have been admitted into one of our fashionable annuals, and it was received with exclamations of "beautiful—delightful—excessively pretty—very."

"None of us can hope to invent any thing like that, I am sure," said Mrs. Good.

"No, indeed," said Rosina.

"Oh! do let us try," cried Phœbe Holland. "It is a capital amusement, and Mr. Good was very clever to set it going."

"Nay, the merit of doing that, lies with Tom," said he, "but pray carry it on, ladies."

"It is your turn now, Miss Phœbe," said Huntley, mischievously.

"Mine! Oh! I'm sure I shall never be able to think of any thing. It's so long since I read any thing about kings. Not since I was at school, I'm sure. Dear me! let me see.—Would the story of King Charles in the oak do?"

"As King Charles did not *die* in the oak, it certainly will not," said Mr. Good.

"Ah, true. Well, I'm sure I can't recollect how he died—in his bed, I suppose—Oh yes—King

Charles the First, Second, I mean, died in his bed, at an advanced age, in spite of the efforts of his friends and physicians; and was deeply lamented by his subjects, young and old——" (" especially the Puritans," muttered Huntley.) ——" Who, though they knew they might have had a better king, thought they should most likely have a worse."

" Very good!" said Miss Jemima.

" There! I have told my story," said Phœbe, looking round for applause, " and I hope you all like it."

" Excellent, admirable!" said Huntley, " we can only lament that it should be so very concise."

" Oh dear, I am nothing of an *ing*provisator, or whatever you call it! So now, Mr. Good, I call upon you."

" Oh, you and Mr. Huntley have quite put me in the dumps," replied he.

" Mr. Russell should have been here to help us," said Huntley to Hannah. She smiled assent.

" After all," said Miss Margaret Holland, " it is not much of a game. We can only tell things, you know, that may be better read in

books, and we are not quite such children as to like stories. If we had thought, now, of bringing a pack of cards——"

"—We might just as well have remained in the Grange parlour," said Mr. Good.

"Why yes, so we might; and as it has turned out, that would have been the best plan after all—only we should not have had a fête champêtre."

"I wish I had a sham pate," said Mr. Good, "for this is a vile draughty corner I have chosen, and I believe I have caught a cold in my head already."

Fanny Good joyfully announced that the rain had ceased; and after waiting till the drippings from the leaves had a little subsided, it was unanimously agreed that they should pick their way back to the Grange as well as they could. During the last half hour, Huntley had been paying Hannah more unequivocal attention than he had ever ventured to do before; and now that she walked homewards between Phœbe Holland and Miss Rosina, he fluttered round the party, and in the absence of other beaux, laughed and talked as much nonsense as any three might have done. He was, as he himself observed, in

unusually high spirits; and Mrs. Wellford's absence, and the approachableness inseparable from an out of doors' party, gave a lively freedom to his looks and language, which, in proportion as he advanced, made Hannah retreat. She had never felt any thing particular in his manner to her before, and in the course of this afternoon, was once or twice rendered uncomfortable by it. Rosina was not wholly without dissatisfaction: Huntley found so much to say to every body, that no one, and she least of all, could complain of neglect, yet she would have wished his attentions not quite so general. On reaching the Grange, they found that Mrs. Wellford had sent them dry shoes, umbrellas, and shawls; and Hannah, quitting Huntley and Phœbe Holland, came towards Rosina with a painful blush, and asked her whether they might not as well go home at once.

"Why?" inquired Rosina, who was stooping to tie her sandal, and consequently did not perceive Hannah's uneasiness.

"We are very wet,—and your cold may be made worse, you know. I think we might as well go."

"We *have* been wet, you mean; we are not wet now—and my cold is quite gone. Oh, I think we had better stay—it will seem so odd to go before tea."

"Very well," said Hannah, who thought it *might* seem odd, and also dreaded Mr. Huntley's offering to escort them home. The Miss Browns' brother, Richard, who had been expected the night before, had arrived at the Grange in their absence, and Matthew was coming to tea. He presently entered, with his crony Sam Good.

"I thought Pennington would be here," said he to Rosina, after looking round the room.

"He was here in the morning—he went home with a headache."

"Did he? If I had known that, I would have looked in on him—I would rather have spent a quiet half hour with him than have come into this noise and bustle, for I feel rather stupid this evening, myself. What an uproar the Miss Browns are making with Mr. Huntley. Did you have any champagne to-day? Every body seems in tip-top spirits."

"I am sure I am not."

"No, you look pale and tired. Ten to one you have increased your cold by getting very warm with walking in the sun in the first place, and then sitting on wet grass or standing under a tree, where there is always sure to be a draught. Enough to give half of the party rheumatic fevers."

"Don't put such shocking things into my head."

"Well, I hope nothing will come of it. How dumpy I feel this evening! Mr. Huntley is flirting with Hannah now. I suppose he'll make the tour of the room. I don't think so much of his manners, now I have seen Lewis Pennington. Huntley is a man of the world, but Lewis is a man of birth and breeding. Good heavens! what a laugh Harriet Brown has! Not much breeding to spare in that quarter, I think. People may come from London, and yet not abound in gentility. I wonder whereabouts that Bloomsbury is, they are always talking of. A good way from the west end, I should fancy."

"Why, Matthew, what makes you so bitter to-night?"

"*Am* I bitter? Well then, to please you, I'll try to be sweet. What a sweet turban Miss Holland has on!"

"You ought to offer your services to her at the tea-table."

"No, no, there are men enough to do that, without me. I shall pretend not to see I am wanted. We are such a large party that there are not enough chairs, and if I were to leave my place, Mr. Huntley would whip it up before I could say Jack Robinson! He has been shifting from one foot to another these ten minutes."

"I dare say he is tired with his walk."

"His walk! what a walk! Not half so far as I have been to-day. All over to Hundleford on foot, and nobody at home when I got there. If that was not enough to—"

"Ha, ha, ha!—"

"What are you laughing at, Rosina?"

"I have found out what makes you so surly."

"I surly?" said Matthew, colouring. "If I am surly, it is because I am tired and vexed with walking five miles in the sun, and five miles back again in the rain, and all for nothing. There! I have caught Miss Holland's eye now! She beckons

to me. I must go! What a pity, when you and I were so pleasantly talking off our weariness to each other!"

Matthew lost his place, as he had anticipated, and Rosina seemed marvellously resigned to the change in her companions. A noisy tea was succeeded by a more noisy game of forfeits, ostensibly for the sake of the young Goods, though it was carried on with equal spirit by many of the grown up members of the party. Farmer Holland loved to promote merriment, and Huntley and Rosina delighted him by the liveliness with which they kept up the game. Towards nine o'clock, Matthew Wellford found himself walking home between his sisters.

"Well Rosina," said he, "I hope you and Mr. Huntley have been talking nonsense to each other's satisfaction."

"Now, Matthew, don't be ill-humoured. People do not come out to make themselves disagreeable to their hosts and hostesses, do they?"

"Why, no—only I think there was rather too much of it to-night."

"Of what?"

"Of noise, and flirting, and romping."

"Romping! oh, Matthew!"

"I don't know what else you could call Phœbe Holland's running off with Mr. Huntley's hat, and his running after her."

"Oh, *there* I agree with you. I thought you were alluding to me."

"And even you—" began Matthew.

"And even then," said Rosina, appearing not to hear him, "it was Phœbe Holland's fault, and poor Mr. Huntley ran after his hat very unwillingly."

"It is my opinion," said Matthew, abruptly, "that grown people ought never to play at children's games. They are sure to go too far, or else look awkward, as Hannah did to-night, when it was her turn to forfeit. Their mirth can never be like the mirth of children. Ignorance of decorum and wilful forgetfulness of it are two very different things."

"Very different," repeated Hannah.

"And I am sure, you, Hannah, wished more than once that my mother had been of the party."

"Well," said Rosina, with a sigh, "altogether it has been a pleasant day."

"I should not have thought a rainy fête champêtre could have been very delightful."

"Oh! but my dear Matthew, the rain did not begin till dinner was quite over, and even then, we amused ourselves very well under the trees."

"How?"

"By telling stories. Mr. Huntley invented a most beautiful tale—"

"Pshaw!"

"Quite on the spur of the moment, Matthew!"—

"Pshaw!"

"And what do you think! He plays the guitar!"

"Pshaw!" repeated he with tenfold emphasis. "That has lowered him ten per cent. in my opinion. How ridiculous, how contemptible, for a man, an Englishman to play on a guitar! I would as soon play on a penny whistle!"

Rosina was too much hurt to reply, and they reached their garden gate in silence. Hannah and Matthew then exchanged a cordial farewell.

"Good night, Matthew," said Rosina coldly.

"Good night, Rosina," replied he, taking hold

of the edge of her bonnet, and obliging her to turn her head to yield a reluctant kiss. "I am sorry I have vexed you by my grumbling, which I did not begin in earnest. Come, Rosy, you and I won't quarrel, shall we?"

"No, indeed, Matthew," replied she, entirely relenting.

"That's right," he replied; "my mother is in bed, I dare say, so I shall not go in again. Good night."

The girls entered the garden. Both were glad to find themselves at home. Hannah had had some pleasure, but with considerable alloy. Huntley's conduct had distressed her; Lewis's absence had made her uneasy; added to this, was the consciousness that her mother was unwell at home, and the fear that Rosina might suffer from the change of weather. As for Rosina, her head ached tormentingly; she was tired, feverish, and half exulting, half unhappy. She felt elation and yet remorse at having refused Lewis; afraid of its coming to the knowledge of her mother and sister, and of their reproaches. Come what might, she thought she could never suffer too much for Hunt-

ley, and yet his conduct this evening had been very equivocal, and filled her with a vague, uneasy sentiment of jealousy. Wearied by the noisy gaiety at Farmer Holland's, she longed for silence and darkness, that she might think over all that had happened and might happen.

Mrs. Wellford had sat up for her daughters; and had the satisfaction of telling them that her head-ache had left her. "Have you had a pleasant day, my dears," said she.

"Very pleasant, mamma," replied they both, in an accent of resignation.

"I have not been without visitors. Lewis has been here."

"Indeed," said Rosina, colouring with alarm.

"Yes; he told me the reason of his quitting you so abruptly. Poor fellow! I was well disposed to pity him when I was suffering, myself. He was evidently feverish and far from well. I fear he caught cold that day at the Pleasance."

"I am sure I hope not," ejaculated Rosina as she lighted her bed candle.

"So he is going, to-morrow, it seems."

"Going!" exclaimed Hannah.

"Yes; did not he mention it to either of you?"

"Not to me."

"Nor to me."

"Well, that is strange. He really appeared quite moved when he wished me good b'ye; but I told him I took it for granted we should see him to-morrow before he started."

"Well, I am surprised at his leaving us so soon," said Hannah.

Rosina could not say that she was. It was easy to gather from what had passed, that Lewis had *not* betrayed the reason of his quitting the gipsy party. Mrs. Wellford appeared wholly free from suspicion. After talking over the events of the day for a short time, they wished their mother good night. The sisters undressed in silence. At length, just as Rosina was preparing to lie down on her pillow, Hannah said earnestly,

"Dear Rosina, just tell me *one* thing. Did Lewis—"

"Oh! don't keep me awake by talking of Lewis," cried Rosina impatiently, "my head aches to distraction, and I am dying for want of sleep."

Hannah was silenced, and after meditating on the little she knew of what had passed, yielded to slumbers as sweet and tranquil as her own disposition; while Rosina remained to toss on her pillow, and vainly seek refuge from her disquieting reflections.

CHAPTER II.

MEDITATIONS AND VEXATIONS.

When Rosina awoke the next morning, she remembered having settled just before she had fallen asleep, that if her heart had not been pre-engaged by Mr. Huntley, it would have been impossible to have withheld it from Lewis Pennington. She had thought over every syllable that had been uttered, and had been forced to acquit Lewis of any unjustifiable bitterness of language; nay, she went back to the evening at Mrs. Good's, and thence to the whole of Lewis's stay at Summerfield, and she felt that however she might resent his charging her with coquetry, it was not undeserved. If she had been convinced from the first, that she could not return his affection, she ought to have avoided a thousand opportunities of which she had availed herself, of perplexing and teazing him. The fact was she had been vain of her power; she had de-

lighted in riveting his chains, without considering or caring how much this paltry pleasure was counterbalanced by the uneasiness of an honest and warm-hearted young man. Now, the last proof of his affection had been given; the offer had been made; and strange to say, the prerogative of refusal had occasioned more compunction than satisfaction. To balance the knowledge of having wounded a very feeling heart, could be set no village gossip, no wonder and envy of female friends. Lewis had promised to keep the secret; and there was nothing she more dreaded than its being surmised or divulged. Rosina sighed. Hannah slept, though the early sunbeams streamed through the white curtains: she therefore softly rose from her sister's side, dressed herself noiselessly, and went down stairs. Leaving Betty, with her broom and tea leaves, in undisputed possession of the parlour, she entered the garden.

It was usually Rosina's custom to pay a visit to her flowers before breakfast. This was well known to Lewis, who had occasionally strolled down the lane, as if by accident, to have the opportunity of exchanging an early good-morrow with her. Perhaps as she now bent over her roses and pinks,

she was half expecting, half wishing that he might steal down the lane, to give her an opportunity of speaking and looking kindly before they parted for ever. As if in echo to her thoughts, a quick step was heard behind the hedge. Rosina's heart beat fast; the garden latch was raised, and she dared not look up, though she heard some one approaching. Bending over her flower border, she affected not to hear the quick breathing of the intruder, who was either much agitated or grievously out of breath, though her crimson cheek betrayed her consciousness.

Alas! how much artifice was wasted! Mr. Russell's foot-boy, hight Joseph Gibbs, unceremoniously dispelled all illusion by saying "A letter, miss;"—touched his hat, and was gone. Rosina felt a pang of disappointment; she recognized Lewis's handwriting, and hastening to the most sheltered part of the garden, she tore open the letter, and read as follows:—

"If there had been the slightest word, look, or action of your's, Rosina, during our yesterday's conversation, on which I could, upon reflection, build any hope, I would not now leave Summer-

field; but I can recall none. *I* was hurried away by passion; *you* were angry with me, but still, if you had felt any latent emotion of tenderness towards me, you would have betrayed some relenting, some disposition to bear with my waywardness, and to set matters right between us. There was nothing of this kind. Your assertion that you could not return my affection was uncontradicted by your look and tone. Be it so then. Heaven knows in what a delusion I have been living during the last month;—but it must have been of my own creating. I suppose I came to Summerfield convinced that such a wondrous fine fellow as myself must necessarily carry all before him. Certainly, I little thought of a rival, and never dreamt of the possibility of your affections being pre-engaged. I am now no longer deluded or unjust. I no longer accuse you of coquetry. As you truly said yesterday, our affections are not in our own power. —I feel that they are not. A mist seems to clear from before my eyes, and I see that from the very first evening of my arrival here, you preferred Huntley. I believe that you had and have some kindliness of feeling towards your old playmate and cousin; and to this I now ascribe all the looks

and words which, at the time, I attributed to a warmer interest. Give me credit for this candour, Rosina—a sleepless night has been spent in attaining it. To be equally willing to allow the blamelessness of *another*, is out of the question. No, I cannot think of him with temper. I believe he is deceiving you: beware, therefore, dear Rosina, lest you lean too strongly on a broken reed; be very cautious, lest you should awake to all the anguish of disappointment. Even supposing him to be sincere, I cannot consider him worthy of you. Neither am *I*, it may be said: there is some difference, however, between us, in birth, connexions, and education. No matter—these may not be indispensable points: therefore I breathe my wishes for your happiness—your *mutual* happiness. In accordance with your request, I have kept our secret; though I had to stand rather a severe cross-examination from Mr. Russell. Perhaps—

"Oh! how hard it is to preserve this cold, unimpassioned style!—In another half-hour I shall leave this place, which, in spite of what has passed between us, will always be dear to my memory. I know your mother will think it strange

that I quit Summerfield without again seeing her; but I could not meet you without hazarding my self-command; and rather than give you pain or incur your displeasure, I prefer being accused of want of politeness. I *cannot* as yet return to my happy home. I shall go on to Chedworth, where an old tutor of mine lives, who is, at present, very ill. There, I shall probably overcome the first anguish of my disappointment; and then,—not *till* then,—prepare to meet the inquiries and penetrating eyes of my father and mother. The last month has been spent in a manner worse than useless: active exertion is what I owe to others and myself, and will prove my best medicine. Once more, farewell.

"LEWIS PENNINGTON."

Rosina's tears fell over this letter. "He does me more than justice," said she to herself; "I have not been as free from coquetry as he allows. Ah! warm and impetuous as he always is, vexed as he was yesterday, what must it have cost him to acquire this temperate tone! He wishes his rival may be happy; he dares not return to his beloved home—Generous Lewis!"

With a heavy sigh, Rosina folded up the letter, postponing its re-perusal till she was secure of meeting with no interruption. She paced the garden, endeavouring to recover her tranquillity, till Hannah summoned her to breakfast.

The day was bleak and cloudy. After breakfast, Rosina brought out her drawing materials, and began to use them rather listlessly. Since Huntley had been engrossed by his own picture, he had had little time to spare for giving her instruction, and, deprived of this exciting motive for perseverance, Rosina's diligence had sensibly slackened. Her mother did not, indeed, derive much benefit from this circumstance. Rosina gave her as little assistance in needlework and household cares as when her drawing-lessons first began to engross all her mornings; neither had she lately made any progress in books of improvement. Much of her leisure was spent before the looking-glass; at other times, she read in a desultory manner, frittered away half hours and hours in fancy work that might be conveniently taken up when visitors were by, or idly sat over her drawing-book, pencil in hand, wondering in what sort of a house Mr. Huntley lived, and how she

should like London and what she should be thought of, if it should ever be her fate to be established there. Dinner parties, *soirées*, silk pelisses, new furniture, gay acquaintance, the opera, the theatres, Hyde Park, flitted before her eyes. Miss Rosina Wellford was in a fair way of being spoiled. Nothing but a little adversity had much chance of saving her.

Huntley called, just as Rosina had set out her colours, to request she would allow him to finish her picture. She was just in the humour to accede, and quickly removed her desk and portfolio. It was too cold for sitting out of doors, and several arrangements were necessary in order to make room for Huntley's apparatus. Every thing at length was settled to his mind; and while engaged in laying his pallet, he talked over the *fête champêtre*. Mrs. Wellford had only had a matter-of-fact account from Hannah, and bits and snatches from Rosina; consequently Huntley's lively sketch combined novelty with amusement. Hannah had no want of deference to complain of to-day. The earnest admirer had sunk into the industrious artist; and no sooner was the pallet laid, than grasping the rest-stick and brushes as

Jove might seize his thunderbolts, he plunged into his task, and never broke silence except to reiterate his request that Rosina would turn her head a little more to the right. Thus, with her eyes averted from the easel and nothing to divert her mind, her thoughts, whether she would or no, followed Lewis gloomily riding to Chedworth.

Huntley had lately seldom pursued his work with such freedom from interruption, and his progress was proportionably rapid. Mrs. Wellford was called off from watching his brush, and unwillingly quitted the easel, leaving Hannah occupied as she had recently been herself.

"How the finishing touches *tell*, Miss Wellford!" said Huntley.

"Yes, indeed," said Hannah. "You put touch on touch where I can see no need for them, and the result is perfect magic."

"It is the '*poco più*'—the *little more*," replied Huntley, "which enables connoisseurs to detect the difference between an original and a copy. Vulgar eyes cannot perceive the fine touches which give the living spirit to the whole, and vulgar hands cannot execute them. There! I think I have finished my work for this morning.

Stay—there is a light catching the hair, which I have not yet touched in. Observe," continued he, with animation, "how beautifully the sun falls on that dark chesnut braid, making it absolutely glitter in its brightness!" Rosina's heart beat with the idea that he was admiring *her*, whereas he was only admiring the effect. "I have caught it!" said he. "Come, Miss Rosina, and see how Orpah starts from the pannel."

Hannah was called from the room by her mother. Huntley sat down to re-touch a fold of the drapery, and bent earnestly over his work, while Rosina's hand rested on the back of his chair. "There!" exclaimed he, looking up triumphantly, as his brush produced an unexpected effect, "What do you think of that?"

At this moment, Mr. Russell entered, and Rosina thought she had never seen him look so cross. His brow was clouded, and his countenance had lost its usual benevolent smile. Huntley shook him by the hand with friendly warmth, but Mr. Russell greeted him coldly, and stood for a minute looking at the picture, though it did not seem to fix his admiration or even attention. "I suppose it is nearly finished, is it not?" said he.

What can make Mr. Russell so ill-humoured? thought Rosina. Can my refusal of Lewis—? But she remembered that Lewis had kept her secret; and she then supposed that he must have been displeased at seeing her leaning on the back of Mr. Huntley's chair. Can he be jealous? surely not, thought she; yet Rosina was beginning to be very credulous of her own omnipotence.

Mrs. Wellford and Hannah almost immediately followed Mr. Russell into the parlour.

"How is Lewis?" enquired Mrs. Wellford.

"Lewis is gone," replied Mr. Russell.

"Gone!" repeated Mrs. Wellford, Hannah, and Huntley.

"Yes," said he, gravely, "his departure was sudden." Rosina thought that his eye fell on her.

"I knew he was going to leave Summerfield," said Mrs. Wellford, rather hurt, "but I certainly expected he would call to take leave of us. I told him as much yesterday evening."

"He commissioned me with his apologies," said Mr. Russell.

"Rather abrupt, this," said Huntley, turning suddenly towards Rosina, with a smile. She

blushed like crimson. Immediately the truth, or something like the truth, flashed on Huntley's mind.

"Very strange indeed," repeated Mrs. Wellford. "I should not have expected this of Lewis—so much as he has been with us."

"Appearances are against him, I must confess," said Mr. Russell; "but I can assure you that nothing was farther from his wish than that you should think him unpolite or ungrateful."

"Unpolite! Politeness has never been a question between his family and mine," said Mrs. Wellford, still evidently hurt. "I had thought we had been on a more friendly footing than that of mere politeness."

"Well—you must demand an *éclaircissement* from him the next time you see him, and in the mean while, argue, as I do, from his known character, that he had some good reason for his conduct. We can do nothing else—unless any of the present company can enlighten us."

"He will be much missed by you," said Hannah, "as he will by all of us."

"I do not know how you ladies will miss him," returned Mr. Russell, drily, "you take these

things very philosophically; but *I* shall miss him, I assure you! I never lived under the same roof with a more attachable companion. His lively spirits were accompanied by a certain warmth of feeling which prevented them from ever wearying; and beneath all that boyish carelessness of manner was more solid sense than some might give him credit for."

A pause succeeded this eulogium, broken by Mr. Russell's resuming with "Had you a pleasant day, yesterday, Rosina?"

"Very pleasant, extremely pleasant," replied she, colouring.

"I am glad to hear it," said he, though in a voice that did not express much satisfaction. "I should have thought you would hardly have recovered so soon after your narrow escape from drowning."

"Oh, I am none the worse for it," said Rosina, playing with her pencil.

"Have you seen any thing of Mrs. Shivers since?"

"She sent very politely to inquire after Rosina, the next day," said Mrs. Wellford, "and the servant told us she was quite well."

"Where a lady is in the case," observed Mr. Russell, "there is seldom any lack of enquiries, and concern, and consideration. No servant came to enquire after Lewis."

"That would have been too ridiculous," said Huntley. "We are supposed to be able to shift for ourselves."

"I was glad, though, to find," said Rosina hesitatingly, "that Lewis was not the worse for the accident—"

"How do you know that he was not? *I* think he was."

"Do you? Dear me, I am very sorry—"

"Lewis is gone to Chedworth, is he not?" said Hannah.

"Yes—to Mr. Bateman's."

"How long will he be on the road?"

"A day and a half, or perhaps two days."

"Perhaps he may return this way to Stoke Barton."

"No, he means to take the western road."

Huntley, not finding the conversation very enlivening, began to wash his brushes.

"Are you for walking to-day, Huntley?" said Mr. Russell, after another pause.

"With all my heart," said Huntley cheerfully, "if you will wait till I have packed up my tools."

"Well, then, I am your man, for I want a brisk walk and an exciting companion to rouse my lazy spirits this morning."

"I am ready," said Huntley, locking his box, and rapidly removing his easel.

"So am I then," said Mr. Russell, taking up his hat. "Good morning, Mrs. Wellford; good b'ye, Hannah;—good morning, Rosina."

They left the room; but Huntley presently returned for one of his gloves. "I fear I shall not have a very lively companion, this morning," muttered he with a smile, as he passed Rosina.

"What in the world can have made Mr. Russell so ill-tempered to-day?" cried she, as soon as the gentlemen were out of hearing. "He was downright cross, surly, and disagreeable."

"Hush, my dear Rosina," returned Hannah gently; "he is only vexed and out of spirits at having unexpectedly lost Lewis."

"Unexpectedly lost Lewis, indeed!" repeated Rosina. "Did the man think he was going to live here all his life?—If he did, he was very foolish, I can tell him!"

This was not destined to be the pleasantest day of Rosina's life. Matthew came in the evening, to drink tea with his mother and sisters. Rosina was alone in the parlour on his entrance. He had scarcely inquired after his mother, when he exclaimed in a vexed tone, "Why, Rosina! Lewis Pennington is gone!"

"Yes, so I find."

"So you find?—How came he to go off so suddenly?"

"I do not know what you call sudden—he was not a fixture here, was he?"

"A fixture? no—but considering he was not limited to time, and that every body in Summerfield had been very civil to him, I should have thought he would have given us a little notice of his intentions, and taken leave of his friends. 'Sow a card, and reap an invitation,' you know, and *vice versâ*. I never was more surprised in my life than when he stopped his horse at the gate for a moment this morning, and told me he was on his way to Chedworth. Mrs. Good had not the least idea of his going, and of course, must feel a little hurt at his not calling on her.

Mrs. Wellford now entering, Matthew went

over the substance of all he had been saying before.

"If Lewis had taken leave of Mrs. Good," said Mrs. Wellford, "it would be more than he has done to us."

"Well, it is a queer business altogether, mother. *I* think that Rosina, here, could tell us something about it."

"I, Matthew? Pray do not talk such nonsense," cried she, colouring deeply, and seeking, she did not exactly know what, in her work basket.

"I *do* think so, though, Rosina."

"You think wrong."

"Come, now, Rosy, be candid."

Her mother's eyes were fixed on her, and Matthew's arm was round her waist.

"Pray, Matthew, leave me alone," said she, with eyes full of tears, "I cannot bear it." And disengaging herself from him, she left the room.

"What do you think now, mother?" said Matthew.

"I hardly know what to think," said Mrs. Wellford, uneasily. "You had better not renew the subject when she returns; perhaps she will speak

candidly to me, if we let her take her own time. Possibly she may have been disappointed in the extent of Lewis's affection. She could hardly expect him to speak openly yet. He may have been afraid of going too far without his father's consent, and resolved to break all off till that was secured. His head-ache yesterday, was very likely brought on by mental uneasiness."

Matthew scrupulously abstained from mentioning Lewis again. Rosina, however, throughout the evening, dreaded the renewal of the subject, and felt fidgetty whenever her mother's eyes were upon her. How very pleasant it is to have had an offer!

CHAPTER III.

VIOLETS.

A SECOND little rose-coloured note from Miss Pakenham, reminded Rosina of her promised visit, and claimed her as Mrs. Shivers's guest on the following Friday. Engrossed as Rosina's mind was by Huntley, his image had now to hold divided empire with lawns, jaconets, and book-muslins, which rendered her heart not unlike that dissected by the Spectator.

One sitting more was to complete her portrait. On the Saturday of this busy week, Mr. Huntley called at the cottage rather later than was his wont, with a roll of music in his hand, which, after paying his compliments to the ladies, he proceeded to unfold.

"Here are a few songs," said he to Rosina, "which I believe you have never tried—I desired my sister to rummage them out of some old port-

folios of mine and to send them down, in hopes they might afford you a little amusement."

"How very kind!" said Rosina, colouring, and looking towards her mother. Then hastily glancing over the songs,—"Rossini, Cimarosa, Carafa,—how very charming!—A sister, have you, Mr. Huntley? You never mentioned her, before—is she young?"

"Yes,—about Miss Wellford's age, I should suppose."

"And her name—"

"Emmeline."

"Emmeline! what a beautiful name! Is she very pretty?"

"Oh,—well enough," said Huntley, carelessly. "Come, will you try this duett, 'Oh, notte soave?' It is very beautiful."

"Will you explain the words to me first, Mr. Huntley? I do not like singing what I do not understand—it is so difficult to give the right expression."

Huntley took up the songs, one after another, and literally translated them. He even wrote down the English words under the Italian with his pencil. "It is a pity you do not study Italian,"

said he. "It is the sweetest and most feminine language in the world. Besides, Italy boasts so many fine poets, whom you can only imperfectly relish through the medium of translations."

"Oh! I should like to understand it extremely, but I have neither teacher nor books."

"*I* principally taught myself," said Huntley, "and if they will be of any service to you or your sister, I shall have pleasure in sending for my Italian books from town."

"I think," said Mrs. Wellford, "Rosina will hardly have leisure or perseverance——"

"Surely, I am not wanting in perseverance?" interrupted Rosina, with a mortified air. "You know, mamma, Miss Pakenham reads Italian; and perhaps, when I am at the Pleasance, she will give me a little instruction. I may not have such another opportunity."

"Are you going from home?" cried Huntley.

"Yes; I am going to Mrs. Shivers's on Friday."

Huntley's eyes flashed with a momentary expression which was quite inexplicable to Rosina. She tried to fancy it was only surprise, and yet it had seemed like exultation.

"Well, I must try to get on with your sister's

picture, and surprise you on your return," said he, unable to prevent a look of complacence from stealing over his features. "The Pleasance is a very beautiful place, is not it? You must take your sketch-book with you, and endeavour to seize some of its finest points of view." After a short silence, he rose and wished good morning, forgetting his proposal to take part in "Oh, notte soave!"

Rosina remained thoughtfully leaning over the songs. "Mr. Huntley did not mean that music to be accepted as *a present*, did he, Rosina?" said Mrs. Wellford.

"I do not know, mamma," said she, starting. "Why do you ask?"

"Because I should not wish it to be accepted. It would not be right."

"No, certainly not," said Rosina, colouring. "Oh, Mr. Huntley never thought of such a thing. He only meant to lend it."

"You know he said that his sister had found the songs in an old portfolio," said Hannah.

"They look new and clean, however," said Mrs. Wellford.

"Here is one which is soiled," said Rosina.

"Oh, we need not doubt his word. Even if he has been so gallant as to buy them and invent the story of the portfolio, we need not be so scrupulous as to institute an inquiry. Surely *that* would be wrong."

"And unnecessary," said Mrs. Wellford. "All that I beg is, that the songs may be learned or copied, but not kept."

Rosina instantly looked for some music paper, and the afternoon was spent in alternately copying and practising Mr. Huntley's songs.

On Monday she sat to him for the last time; and again a little circumstance happened which gave her uneasiness. The day was so fine that they had resumed their seats in the garden; and as Hannah stood looking at her sister's picture, she took a rose and some mignionette which had somewhat faded, from her bosom, and threw them away. Huntley finished his morning's work; and the ladies, who were going to Heeley, returned to the house to dress themselves for the walk. Rosina, however, missed her handkerchief, and returned back to look for it. She saw Huntley, whose back was towards her, stoop eagerly to pick up the discarded flowers, press them to his lips with energy,

and hastily conceal them. Rosina stood transfixed for a moment, and then hurriedly retraced her steps. No sooner was she out of sight than she stopped, her cheeks in a glow, to consider what had happened. Here had been no artifice, no attempt at effect. Huntley could not have suspected that a creature was near him. His action had been the romantic and spontaneous result of his feelings. Rosina was bewildered, amazed, and angry, yet could hardly tolerate her own suspicions. Smothering conviction under the persuasion that she must have been mistaken, she entered the house. But although Rosina tried to deceive herself, she could not maintain her usual ease of manner towards Mr. Huntley. She coldly drew back from his offered arm as he prepared to accompany them on their walk, and took that of her mother. "He deserves a little punishment at any rate," thought she. Huntley, rather surprised, but not a whit disappointed, offered the rejected arm to Hannah, and seemed little sensible of the designed mortification. Mrs. Wellford and Hannah were equally cheerful, and Rosina alone was sad and silent.

In the evening, Matthew drank tea with his

family; and an important question was discussed. How could Rosina be conveyed to the Pleasance? Miss Pakenham had made no mention of Mrs. Shivers's carriage, and though this might be from forgetfulness, it was awkward to depend upon an uncertainty. Mr. Good's gig—! Did Matthew think it would be asking too much, to request that he might drive his sister over? Would Mr. Good be affronted? Would it be putting him to much inconvenience? Matthew did not know. As to Mr. Good's being affronted, there was not the least chance of that—he had never known him affronted but once in his life, and that was by Parker of Heeley. He would not mind asking for the gig, plump, if he thought it could be spared. The thing was, that old Kippis required now to be seen every day, and the Grove lay in an opposite direction to the Pleasance. However, if Rosy was not tied to any particular time, and did not care whether she went late or early, he would see what could be done.

Mr. Huntley came in just as the tea things had been removed. He was anxious to know whether Rosina had tried his music. After a little persuasion, the piano was opened; and duett and

song succeeded each other till the collection was exhausted. Huntley was delighted with the manner in which Rosina accompanied him, and she, in spite of the little *contre-temps* in the morning, was only too well pleased with his praise. Mrs. Wellford pursued or laid down her needle-work, listened to the singers, and talked to Matthew by turns. Matthew, who began to believe that Huntley *was* to be his brother-in-law,—whether guitar-playing were a manly accomplishment or no,—mechanically snipped to pieces a remnant of ribbon which Rosina had intended for a bonnet string, and drew heads of dogs and horses on the cover of her scrap book. This album had heretofore been devoted to extracts from ancient and modern authors, snatches of poetry, historical summaries, traits of village character, and such remarks on books, scenery, flowers, and natural history as might engage the mind of an innocent and inquiring girl of sixteen or seventeen. Some lines scrawled in Sam Good's round text on the last Valentine's Day, first broke the uniformity of the evenly written pages: they began with,

> "Come, rove with me, Rosina,
> The trees were never greener—"

a falsehood which nothing but the difficulty of finding a rhyme could have excused. From this era, the scrap book assumed a different character. Idleness had caused it to be laid aside till Huntley had become domesticated in the family; and to Sam Good's valentine verses succeeded some closely written pages on colouring and perspective; the result of Huntley's verbal instructions. To these were annexed some stanzas by Herrick, written down by Huntley from memory; and here, Matthew remarked, the scrap-book opened of its own accord. Several contributions from Lewis Pennington followed; all affecting to be general, though bearing some indirect allusion to Rosina: for instance, Carew's old song beginning with "He that loves a rosie cheek;" the same poet's "Lover's Complaint—"

> "Now all things smile, only my love doth lower;"

and two or three rather pointed passages from Madame de Genlis. Matthew saw their application and shut the book with an angry sigh. Hannah, unusually idle, sat by the piano forte, her cheek resting on her hand, and her mind lulled into that passive enjoyment of the present, and absence of regret for the past or anxiety for the

future, which the Turks dearly purchase by the use of their favourite but dangerous drug. Huntley was perhaps inspired by her softly smiling eyes,

"Mild as the moonbeams which on fountains tremble."

His voice had certainly never owned more fascinating tones. Rosina sighed with regret when the evening terminated. Her suspicions had been completely forgotten: unfortunately for her present tranquillity, they were soon to be re-awakened.

Lady Worral had not been seen or heard of for several days. Mrs. Wellford, fearful she had had a relapse, wished one or both of her daughters to call on the old lady. As Hannah was finishing some fine work for Rosina, she offered either to accompany her or work for her in her absence; the latter of which, on account of her approaching visit to Mrs. Shivers, Rosina preferred. It was a pleasant walk to Lady Worral's, and she arrived at the house without any adventure. Her ladyship was rather rheumatic, but by no means seriously indisposed, and very glad to have some one to listen to the detail of her complaints. When she had exhausted the subject of her growing infirm-

ities, her ladyship began to inquire for the news of the village; and on finding that Lewis Pennington had left Summerfield, she rated Rosina so soundly for letting him, as she termed it, slip through her fingers, that Rosina was very glad to take leave. Instead of returning by the shadeless newly gravelled carriage road, she took a narrow path leading through a small copse, which terminated in a gate in the park palings. Distressed by the bluntness of Lady Worral's language, she gravely walked on, her eyes fixed on the ground, till she was startled by the quick slamming of the little gate. She looked up, expecting to see some one approaching, but the gate was before her, and nobody to be seen. It was evident, therefore, that some one had preceded her, who might possibly have been sitting on a wooden bench at no great distance from the gate. As Rosina passed it, she saw what seemed a letter lying on the ground; and taking it up, she looked for the direction, to discover to whom she might return it. To her no small surprise, it proved to be a drawing of Hannah's, folded up in a portable shape, the reverse side closely covered with writing. How a drawing of Hannah's could

possibly come into such a situation, Rosina could not divine: it was one of her best attempts at copying from nature, and merely consisted of a coloured group of violets. Rosina turned the paper, and seeing some verses headed "The Violet," began to read them, supposing her sister had been struck with their appropriateness, and had copied them from some book. The writing was so cramped in order to get several stanzas into a little space, that it might be that of Hannah or any one else. How great was her surprise when she read as follows!

"Where shall I match my fair one's eyes?
Not in the azure of the skies—
The bird's-eye is a shade too pale,
So is the harebell of the vale:
Only the violet's darker dye
Can match the colour of her eye.

"Where shall I match her breath's perfume?
Not where the gorse and heather bloom—
Not in the hyacinth's sickly smell,
Not in the cowslip's scented bell:
Such heavenly fragrance may be met
Only in the violet.

"Where shall I match my fair one's mind?
No emblem of its charm I find
In the heat and vulgar glare
Of the gaudy bright parterre;

Should I seek her image yet,
'Tis still, 'tis still the violet!

"In fragrance, modesty, and hue,
Two sweet resemblers here I view.
But oh, fell thought! upon the dead
I've seen young violets scattered.
Cease, similes! Must Hannah's bloom
Like theirs, be gathered for the tomb?"

Rosina stood aghast. The colour suddenly rose to her temples, and as suddenly faded away. The verses were Huntley's! He loved Hannah!

Sitting down on the bench, she remained with her eyes fixed on the tell-tale paper, till tears came to her relief. But they were quickly checked by indignation. Lewis had been right: Huntley had been playing a double part. How Rosina's heart swelled with anger, disdain, and shame, at the idea! He should find that he could deceive her no longer: she would shew him that she completely saw through him, and that his insidious conduct excited no other emotion than the most entire contempt. But, insidious? *Had* Mr. Huntley really deserved that epithet? Could she bring any particular speech or action of his to substantiate the charge? Many, many! was at first her answer to herself; but on rapidly run-

ning over the past, she knew not on what to fix her accusation. His crimes were as untangible as motes in sunbeams. His language had been that of common gallantry: looks and tones had been *felt* as meaning much, but had they been intended to mean as much as had been understood by them? Huntley seemed unable to address a woman except with *empressement;* Rosina had often been angry with him for throwing away sentiment on Phœbe Holland; and allowing for her own greater claims to youth and prettiness, perhaps his attentions to her had meant no more than to Phœbe. Mortifying, intolerable thought! Rosina sighed bitterly, and attempted to arrange her ideas, but they were in pitiable chaos. She read the verses over again. How came they there? Mr. Huntley must have been disturbed by her approaching footsteps, and have accidentally dropped them in his retreat. Could he have caught a glimpse of her white dress through the copsewood, and have mistaken her for Hannah? It was not unlikely, and in that case he might have intentionally left the verses in her way. The drawing must have been stolen: Hannah could never have *given* it. Rosina's eyes remained fixed

on the paper. Lewis's warning again and again recurred to her memory. "Ah, Lewis!" thought she, "love made you jealous, but it also made you clear-sighted! Why would not I believe you?" Then as the thought returned that she was not loved by Huntley, tears swelled into her eyes; and she envied Hannah the possession of affections which she was sure she did not appreciate. "Happy girl!" thought she, "and yet what happiness can be too great for her? I can hardly think she has been blind to all that has been going on; yet if she really is unaware how much I have been attached to Mr. Huntley, her feelings shall never be embittered by my confessions and complaints. I hope I have too much generosity, too much pride for that!"

She remained sitting in a kind of dream, unconscious of the lapse of time, till the striking of the village clock made her start. Then, heroically resolving to resign Huntley without a sigh, she hastily wiped her eyes, put the verses in her pocket, and pursued her walk home. It was the first great trial of Rosina's life.

By the time she had reached the garden gate, she had acquired a feverish sort of command over

her spirits, which she hoped would enable her to behold the most evident proofs of Huntley's fickle affection without betraying any emotion. Hannah was in the parlour when she entered it, turning over the leaves of some books with apparent interest.

"Oh, Rosina," said she, "here are the Italian books which Mr. Huntley offered to lend you. He sent to town for them the same evening, and has just brought them himself. Was it not kind?"

"Very kind," said Rosina abruptly, without even looking at them, "but it does not much signify. My fancy for learning Italian has gone off."

"How very changeable of you, when the poor man has taken so much trouble to please you!"

"*He* take trouble to please me?" repeated Rosina, whose indignation was rapidly obtaining the mastery of her prudence; "I am not the only person who is"—*changeable*, she was going to add, but checking herself in time, she ran up stairs that she might not lose her self-command.

On her return she found the parlour empty, and with a sigh she examined the books. There were a dictionary, a grammar, and an 'Italian Reader,'

something the worse for wear, interspersed, not with schoolboy scribblings, but with sensible notes in Mr. Huntley's handwriting, forming very good stepping-stones for any one who, like himself, attempted to struggle through the difficulties of the language without a master. There were also two small volumes of Metastasio, elegantly bound, on the fly leaves of which was inscribed the name of 'Emmeline Huntley,' in a delicate Italian hand. Rosina stood with her eyes fixed on the name, till tears fell on the page. She hastily wiped them away; then drawing the verses from her pocket, she smoothed them and placed them in the portfolio of their rightful owner, leaving them to take their chance of meeting the eyes of her to whom they were addressed. She had scarcely done this when her mother entered, and inquired how she had found Lady Worral. Rosina briefly informed her, and then sitting down to her needlework, pursued it in unbroken silence.

In the course of the afternoon, Hannah happened to open her portfolio. "Dear me!" exclaimed she, as she turned over its contents, "here are the violets I thought I had lost!" Rosina made no reply; and presently looking up from her

work, saw Hannah silently reading the verses. A slight colour rose on her cheek, but she made no comment on them; and withdrawing them from the portfolio, quitted the room. Rosina pursued her work with a sigh.

It was fortunate for her that Mr. Huntley did not call this evening. She conducted herself so as to excite no other remark than the silent one, that she spoke less than usual, and seemed rather out of spirits. At night, her pillow was steeped in tears; while Hannah, little imagining that any thing disturbed her, slept peacefully at her side. "Oh, that Mr. Huntley had never come to Summerfield!" was now Rosina's wish. Alas! there appeared little chance of his soon quitting the neighbourhood. Hannah's portrait was still in its first colours. On the following day she sat for her picture. Rosina pursued her needlework by her side, jealously listening to every syllable of Huntley's which might confirm her suspicions. Although his conversation was unusually commonplace, it seemed to Rosina, to betray his affection for Hannah at every syllable; and at any rate, the greater portion of it was addressed to her. Rosina did not consider that this might partly arise from

her own monosyllabic answers, which rendered it impossible for any one to maintain a connected dialogue of any spirit or length with her. In spite of her intended indifference of manner, her unwonted silence and flagging spirits could not fail to be noticed. Huntley feared he had unwittingly offended her, and endeavoured to restore her to her usual cheerfulness; but his efforts were vain: Rosina was not to be drawn out, even by anecdotes of Sir Thomas Lawrence, and disquisitions on Mozart. He gave up the trial, hoping the young lady would find her good humour in her own good time; while Rosina, unconscious how much peevishness she had displayed, was deceiving herself in the belief that she had exercised great self-command.

It was fortunate that Rosina's approaching visit to Mrs. Shivers occasioned so much employment for her thoughts and hands. The discovery of Mr. Huntley's supposed inconstancy had woefully depressed her, but with the Pleasance in prospect, it was impossible to be quite miserable. She sighed as she absently pinned and placed the sleeve of a frock which she was modernizing. The sleeve was stitched into the wrong armhole

and made up inside outwards, so all her work had to be done over again; and while she was fretting over her stupidity she forgot to think of Mr. Huntley. Then, when all was once more in a fair train, her thoughts were no sooner off duty than they flew back to the violets, to the Sortes Virgilianæ, to the sittings under the walnut tree; and just as she was beginning to feel that she should never be happy again,—it occurred to her to wonder whether Miss Pakenham *always* wore silk stockings. Let no one laugh at Rosina; for amidst the deepest grief, the mind has a natural propensity to relieve itself by momentary distractions of a similar tendency.

Friday came; and Matthew was to drive his sister to the Pleasance between the hours of three and four. But at half-past two, Miss Pakenham made her appearance in her aunt's pony phaeton. She had had no idea that it had not been promised and expected. Only imagine, if, after all the doubts and difficulties that had occurred, *two* equipages at Rosina's disposal had driven down the lane at once! Matthew would have found that Mrs. Shivers's carriage *literally* "stopped the way."

Maria had heard that the Wellfords lived in a cottage; a very comprehensive word, which sometimes designates a ground-floor palace. Certainly, she was rather surprised to find the White Cottage so *very* unpretending in appearance; but she praised and admired every thing there was to praise and admire, and drove off with Rosina, leaving Mrs. Wellford and Hannah convinced that she was one of the pleasantest young women in the world. This was very kind and judicious of Maria, for it is easier to put a family out of conceit with their house than to give them another; and a lady cannot help seeing at a glance what it would take a gentleman a twelvemonth to discover. A few flower-pots, a few books, and one or two pretty faces convince a gentleman that a mere hovel is a cottage *ornée;* a lady sees that the carpet has been darned, that the chintz furniture has washed out, and that the apparently rose-wood table is an imitation. Mrs. Wellford's table was mahogany. However,—

Once out of Summerfield, so many subjects offered for conversation, that it would have been difficult for the most love-lorn damsel to have nursed her secret griefs. Rosina was at once

transplanted out of her little world; and, at the end of five miles' drive, found herself among people who thought seldom of Mr. Russell, seldomer of Lewis Pennington, and had never heard of Mr. Huntley.

Mr. Pakenham had gone to Scotland to shoot moorfowl; the domestic society, therefore, at the Pleasance, was as confined as that which Rosina had left behind her; but besides the exertion of mind always excited by strangers, and strangers in a higher sphere than ourselves, there was a great deal of quiet gaiety in Mrs. Shivers's mode of life. Morning visitors were not infrequent, and scarcely an afternoon passed without a call being made at some park, lodge, or villa in the neighbourhood. This gave Rosina an opportunity of seeing a greater variety of society than had ever before been afforded her; and her situation as a visitor to Mrs. Shivers, caused her to meet with unfailing attention and politeness.

One of their earliest calls was on the Hinckleys of Hundleford. They found the family at home, and yet not at home—that is to say, they were practising archery on a lawn in front of the drawing-room windows. Mr. Hope and one or

two other loungers were looking on, and a good deal was said about hearts and darts, and Diana, and Cupid. Rosina was disappointed in her brother's favourites: the eldest Miss Hinckley was plain, and the younger sisters were affected. There was a kind of showiness about them, however, which might impose on a very young man. They dressed, talked, and carried themselves like beauties, though beauties they were not. At present archery was the grand important business of life at Hundleford, and nothing could be talked of but the lovely white hats and green feathers of the archer uniform, Miss Joliffe's graceful attitudes, and Mrs. Peterson's bad shooting.

Much discourse was passing between the self-important Mr. Hope and one of the young Mr. Hinckleys about a Lady Jane Somebody, with whom they seemed on very familiar terms. Rosina, whose imagination was dazzled by grand names, listened attentively to snatches of their conversation, and thought Lady Jane, whoever she was, must be a very odd person. Mr. Hope talked in raptures of the "old girl." Her ladyship, it appeared, was a huntress. She had lately hurt herself in clearing a five-barred gate. Her

physicians were mentioned, and Mr. Hope expressed with strong feeling his emotions on being at first told that they could not save her. Tom Hinckley declared his opinion that she was *spoiled.* Mr. Hope contradicted him with eagerness, and assured him that in another season she would be as well as ever. He should turn her out to grass!—Lady Jane proved to be a favourite mare.

At Mr. Field's at Field House, they found the table covered with Methodistical books; and Rosina heard doctrines discussed and tenets expounded in a manner wholly new to her. There was a union of simplicity and energy in Mrs. and Miss Field's manner, which rendered it impossible to suspect them of hypocrisy; and the new ideas they awakened furnished Rosina with materials for profitable consideration. At Barham Lodge again, the Miss Petersons made such a display of accomplishments and blue-ism, as to give her a sickening of pretension; and at Stepsford, only five miles from her native village, old Mrs. Joliffe and her nieces had so much tittle-tattle to relate of their neighbours, the Joneses, and the Whites, and the Simpsons, and the Atkinsons, and ap-

peared to deem all the rest of the world so uninteresting in comparison, that Rosina was led to question whether she herself were not somewhat too much disposed to think Summerfield affairs of primary importance. Mrs. Shivers and Miss Pakenham amused themselves by commenting on the varieties of character which they met in these visits, without indulging in ill-nature; and Rosina profited more by the casual morals thus drawn, than if they had fallen from the lips of persons of whose station and opinion she stood less in awe. She saw Miss Pakenham receive attention and admiration without displaying any elation or self conceit; she heard folly reprehended as freely in the wealthy and titled as in the insignificant; she heard pretension ridiculed, and conscientious limitation of expenses praised. She heard girls laughed at for dressing beyond their station and neglecting domestic duties, and their parents blamed with more severity, for bringing them up improperly. Miss Pakenham was lively and acute; Mrs. Shivers's conversation, without any tinge of effort or pedantry, united enough of natural wit with acquired knowledge, to require a little effort to keep up with her. She played ex-

tremely well on the harp, and Rosina had an opportunity of pleasantly improving herself by accompanying her on an excellent grand piano. Her fancy for learning Italian returned when she listened to Maria's tantalizing encomiums of Tasso, and saw the beautiful engravings in Mrs. Shivers's Gierusalemme. An hour devoted every morning to this study agreeably exercised her mind; and the profusion of fine prints and drawings in the portfolios around her, only made it a difficult task to decide which she should first attempt to copy. The library was a world of happiness in itself. Surrounded by so many sources of amusement, what wonder that Rosina's spirits should rapidly recover from their depression, and that she should learn to think of Mr. Huntley with a degree of indifference, which to herself she called resignation? "Absence," it has been observed, "like a puff of wind, makes a well kindled flame burn brighter, but blows a smaller one out." The visit was prolonged from a week to rather more than a fortnight, and its conclusion was gayer than its opening. Mr. Hope and the Hinckleys dined at the Pleasance; and perhaps Rosina's estimate of Mr. Huntley's manners and

education was rather altered by the glimpses thus afforded of young men in a rank of life superior to his own; so that from thinking of him somewhat more highly than he had deserved, she now began to rate him rather below his real worth.

On the day after her quitting the Pleasance, Mrs. Shivers and Miss Pakenham were going to Hastings. She returned to Summerfield with abundant materials for long details to her mother and sister, and with a heart scarcely retaining the impress of its sometime love.

CHAPTER IV.

FINE ARTS.

And how sped Mr. Huntley's painting and wooing?

With satisfaction, almost with exultation, he had heard of Rosina's projected absence. Somehow, she had always seemed to stand across his path—his feelings and language had been misconstrued, nor did there seem any chance of his explaining them, till he had an opportunity of speaking in plainer terms than he had yet dared to use.

Rosina was gone, and the path was clear! He could finish Hannah's portrait and besiege her heart at the same time. But Huntley was very wary; he was in thorough earnest, and his genius was as remarkable in love-making as in any other art, accomplishment, or science, which he had yet mastered. The more his acquaintance

with Hannah improved, the more he became sensible of the difference between her retiring manners and the approachableness of her sister, and of the difficulty of awakening her dormant passions and kindling her imagination. But remembering that the placidly smiling wave, may anon be roused by the winds to chafe and foam on the rocks, and that thunder sleeps unsuspected in the summer cloud, Huntley trusted that Hannah's heart, if once awakened, might glow with all the intensity of feeling he wished to excite. Leaving little to depend on her inexperience and vanity, and wisely judging of her character, he resolved to begin by making her *like* him, hoping that in time she would like him better than she loved every one else. He entered with interest into all her favourite pursuits, encouraged her to talk to him of her books, her flowers, her brothers, and the villagers, discovered a wonderful similarity of feeling between them, declared his passionate fondness for a country life immediately after giving tantalizing descriptions of London, expressed her own opinions for her better than she could have done herself, or replied to her remarks by a bright intelligent smile and a gratified "that

is exactly what I think—that is what I was going to observe!" He praised her favourite authors, detected her favourite passages, frequented her favourite walks, and sketched her favourite flowers. "Dahlias have wanted interesting associations to me hitherto," said he, "but henceforward, they will always remind me of you." Then he appeared so sensibly to appreciate the excellence of Mrs. Wellford's character, and spoke so well of Mr. Russell, and so often of Matthew and Rosina, that Hannah's good will was completely secured. Good will, indeed, does not amount to love, but it affords excellent opportunities for making it. Hannah did not run in from the garden if she saw Mr. Huntley coming down the lane; and whenever she went to the village or the scattered cottages around it, he seldom failed to meet her, and to escort her back. Why should she shrink from his society? He never talked nonsense, as she had occasionally heard young men do, about bright eyes and incurable wounds: to Miss Phœbe Holland, for whom he cared not a straw, love was the burthen of his lay, while to her he always spoke as to a rational being. When, indeed, the point of their similarity of tastes and sympa-

thy of minds seemed established beyond dispute, his speech became more explicit, though still it was *une voix voilée.* He spoke of love—not of his own!—but of others; and history, poetry, common life, were all in turn ransacked for illustrations, leading to disquisitions on constancy, devotedness, affection without hope, all treated as general subjects, though broken off with a pause and a sigh; till Hannah, like the heroine of Mrs. Tighe's exquisite allegory, dwelt in the atmosphere of love and felt the fanning of his wings, unconscious of his presence. Her mother was more clear-sighted, but she liked Huntley, and believed he might make Hannah happy. It would not be a brilliant match for either; both had exhaustless treasures of mind,—of fortune, none.

Italian became another vehicle of Huntley's passion. Hannah, attracted by the appearance of the books which he had sent for Rosina, and rather ashamed of her sister's inconstancy of purpose, said she should attempt to make use of them herself, and Huntley eagerly offered himself as her teacher. Rosina, meanwhile, was beginning her acquaintance with the language under the direction of Miss Pakenham, but the progress of the

sisters was very different. Rosina toiled through the tedious routine of grammars and exercise books. Huntley skipped over as much of the dry part of the business as possible, and endeavoured to lead Hannah by a new and quick road to the sense of her author. He made her read after him a stanza from his pocket Tasso, assisted her in construing it, and by frequent repetition, possessed her of the pronunciation. Then taking the book from her hand, he translated for her, page after page, of the fascinating story,—closed it with a smile, and to accustom her to the sound, repeated some favourite verse or sentiment in his beautifully modulated tones, till she caught not only the accent, but the very tone and emphasis of her lover. Huntley, delighted with her and with himself, exacted frequent repetition of her lesson—for her own improvement, as he would have it believed, but in reality, to luxuriate in hearing the voice of her he loved utter beautiful thoughts in the most musical of languages. Well might Milton say

"Questa e lingua di cui si vanta Amore."

Love breathes in its softness, its repetitions of sound, its 'felicità, crudeltà, amore, ardore, spe-

ranza, costanza,' which chime in with each other so naturally, that an Italian lover can scarcely escape being an improvisatore. So many minutes, hours, half mornings, and whole evenings did Huntley contrive to spend with Hannah, that he was seldom out of her sight, and seldomer out of her thoughts. Like the coin which, impressed on our hand, we seem still to hold after it is removed, he, being absent, appeared still present; and Hannah, poring over her Italian lessons, watering her flowers, or plying her needle, had still one image before her eyes, coming uncalled, like Abra, and changing disguises as rapidly as Matthews in his Monopolylogue.

CHAPTER V.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE ARTIST'S PROGRESS.

Rosina had so much to relate, and her listeners were so much interested in the narrative of her visit, that bed-time had nearly arrived before she made the inquiry—"Well! and how has everything been going on here?"

"Much as usual, I believe," said Hannah.

"That means—Mr. Russell has called three or four times each week; Mr. Huntley, ditto, ditto; Matthew has drunk tea with you twice, and Phœbe Holland called once; Mr. Good has been seen in the village, and Lady Worral at church; Mrs. Greenway has met you at the shop and told you that she has had a charming letter from Anne and Eliza; on Monday you were caught in the rain, and on Tuesday you carried an umbrella to Heeley and back without wanting it. Would not that be 'much as usual?'"

"But we have not been to Heeley."

"An evident proof that I was not at home. What! a whole fortnight unenlivened by a walk to Heeley? No ribbons, bobbins, tapes, or needles wanted, nor any wants invented? You must have been shockingly dismal—or excessively happy. Which?"

"Not particularly dismal," said Hannah, in the smiling consciousness of having been particularly the reverse.

"Not dismal at all," said Mrs. Wellford, looking expressively at Hannah.

"Well, I wonder at that, considering *I* was away; I am of less importance than I thought I was."

At night, when Rosina went to her bedroom window, she called Hannah to see how beautifully the moon was shining. Hannah obeyed, and after a few moments' silence, gently repeated,

> "Guarda che bianca luna!
> Guarda che notte azura!
> Un' aura non susurra,
> Non tremola una stella."

"Why, Hannah!" cried Rosina, with surprise, "are you able to quote Italian?"

"I have been learning a little in your absence," replied she, smiling.

"I have been learning Italian too, but you seem to know much more about it than I do. Your fluency, in so short a time, is quite surprising! I should never have suspected you of a talent for acquiring languages!"

The next morning, the two sisters were sitting at work, and Rosina was wondering to herself what advances Mr. Huntley had made, during her absence, in Hannah's affections. She was just going to ask whether the picture were nearly finished, and suddenly looked up, when she perceived a crimson blush on the cheek of her sister, whose eyes were turned towards the garden. Rosina looked the same way, and saw Mr. Huntley passing through the gate. That blush told volumes! Rosina again glanced at Hannah, who was quietly resuming her work, while her colour was gradually returning to its usual delicacy of tint.

Before Rosina had much time for speculation, Huntley entered. There was ease as well as pleasure in his manner of meeting her—he held out his hand. Rosina was surprised; she gave her

hand to him, however, with as much coolness as she could; and looked towards her sister. Hannah, though still slightly blushing, received him with as much evenness of manner as usual; it was only from Huntley's look and tone that any thing could be gathered; and they were less ceremonious, more open, more expressive of affection than Rosina had anticipated. She could hardly understand his having gained so much ground in so short a time. He appeared to feel himself on the footing of a recognized lover.

"Will you walk, this morning?" said he, after conversing for a short time on indifferent topics.

"Do you not mean to paint?" inquired Rosina, with a little surprise.

"Oh no, the colours are not dry. I should do more harm than good if I touched the pannel to-day. Come, let me persuade you. The weather is enchanting. You had better walk."

"I hardly know,—this morning, Rosina?" said Hannah, hesitatingly.

"Why should this morning be more unfavourable than yesterday, to-morrow, or any other morning?" said Huntley, rapidly. "There can

be so little rational hope that such fine weather will last long, that you should avail yourselves of it as much as you can."

"What do you think, Rosina?" again inquired Hannah, with unusual indecision.

"If you and mamma have no objection," said Rosina smiling at her, "I can have none."

"Mamma is engaged—she will not be able to accompany us.—Perhaps I had better go and ask her," said Hannah, and she left the room.

"You have had charming weather during your visit to Mrs. Shivers," said Huntley, playing with Hannah's scissars. "I suppose you had a walk every day."

"A *drive* every day."

"A drive! Ah, true. I forgot what grand ladies I was speaking of. A carriage is a fine thing; however," (laughing) "I doubt not whether we pedestrians have not the most enjoyment, after all."

'Have not' is better than 'had not,' certainly, thought Rosina. She could not help feeling that he addressed her with more freedom and yet more indifference than hitherto. His easy, open way

of asking them to take a walk was something new: formerly, he had occasionally accompanied them, but only by accident or on sufferance.

Hannah returned to say that her mother had no objection to their walking, but that she should be unable to accompany them.

"I suppose," said Rosina, as she and her sister dressed themselves, "Mr. Huntley has been here a good deal, in my absence—hey, Hannah?"

"Yes,—that is—much as usual. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, I do not know.—He seems more *at home* here than he did—"

"Well—and in proportion as our acquaintance improves, is not that natural?"

"Oh! very natural, I dare say!" said Rosina, laughing, as she ran down stairs.

The walk was as pleasant as walks generally are, when a gentleman dividing two ladies pays considerably more attention to one than the other. Rosina knew that this would often be the case now, and was resigned. She could remark without bitterness of feeling, Hannah's softly smiling countenance and downcast eyes. Rosina had often marvelled how Hannah would look if she

should ever be in love, or whether she were capable of ever falling in love at all. The doubt was now answered, and it seemed to her that Hannah looked and spoke exactly as might have been foreseen by any one who had had opportunities of judging of her character.

On their return, they fell in with Mr. Russell. He smiled, but with a certain degree of gravity as he spoke to them. Mr. Russell has not lost his austere looks yet, thought Rosina; am I still out of his good graces?

CHAPTER VI.

FRATERNAL CONFIDENCES.

The next post brought her the following letter from Marianne Pennington.

"Oh, Rosina! I am mortified and angry with you! I need not say why, for though Lewis will not speak honestly to me, I can guess from his manner at much that has passed at Summerfield. He came home three days ago, and seemed as glad to see us as usual. The only suspicious circumstance was his extreme guardedness in neither saying too much or too little, and when you consider Lewis's character, you will grant that this was enough to set our minds at work. When we asked him if he had had a pleasant excursion, he said 'very,' and began to praise the roads and scenery. Papa told him that would not do;—that a man who had lived a month in a country village must have characters as well as roads to talk

about. He then began to speak of Mr. Russell, of your mother, of your brother, your sister,—every one, in short, except yourself; and when I asked him—pray do not blush,—whether you were a pretty girl, he replied 'yes—so they are both.' He gave a half sigh, but no more could Sophy and I sift out of him, except yes, yes, yes, when we asked if you could do this, that, or the other; and when he began to play with the children, and talk absurd French to Mademoiselle Mackau, we knew the case was hopeless for that night. Next morning, to our surprise and vexation, he began to talk of his travels, and told my father that instead of waiting till next spring, he had been thinking he might as well spend the approaching winter in Germany. You know Lewis has always had a fancy for rambling, and used to frighten mamma when he was a boy, by declaring that as soon as he was of age he should set off to discover the source of the Niger. Since he has grown older, the Niger scheme has passed off, and mamma is well content to hear him talk of Germany and Italy as a distant prospect; but this sudden idea alarmed us all, with the exception of my father. To-day they have been seriously talking on the sub-

ject, and I really believe it will end in his going to Heidelberg. Oh Rosina! this is all owing to you! I am convinced of it. Lewis was growing out of his boyish whims, and if it had not been for a disappointment, would have cared as little for Heidelberg as for the Troglodytes; and now, what a brother we shall lose! Sophy and I are at the last gasp of despair; but I am the most to be pitied, for I have always been his chosen companion and confidante. Three years ago, when he fancied himself in love with a Miss Edgar (who, by the by, is nearly twice his age,) I was made the partaker of all his little triumphs and vexations; therefore now, when I suspect there is some real feeling excited, it is doubly mortifying that he should be so close. That my suspicions are not quite without foundation, I am certain, from what passed this morning; for as he was lounging upon a sofa, reading or pretending to read, I came on him by surprise, and said, 'Come, dear Lewis, now that we are quite by ourselves, tell me all about it.' 'About what, Miss Marianne?' said he, starting and colouring. 'Oh!' said I, 'I am sure you would not be in this mighty hurry to set off for Germany, if there were not some disap-

pointment in the case.' 'Disappointment! nonsense!' cried Lewis, forcing a laugh, 'you girls always fancy that love must be the prime mover of all our actions. I'll tell you what, Marianne—I don't think either you or I shall ever marry; so some of these days we'll set up housekeeping together, and have our books, and our horses, and our garden, and be the happiest old bachelor and old maid that ever lived.' With these words he walked off, and set out on a long ride from which he has not yet returned, leaving me convinced that he or you might clear up a good deal of mystery if you chose. Have you quarrelled, Rosina? Do tell me, if that is the case—Lewis has the sweetest disposition in the world, but he *is* a little warm sometimes, and he may have offended you, or you may have unintentionally offended him. *We* quarrelled once, but we soon made it up again and were better friends than ever afterwards; and so may you still be, if you choose.

"I suppose you know that your aunt Diana is lying dangerously ill at Dover. Mr. Curtis was summoned by express yesterday to attend her. I wish her money would go to you instead of to Mrs. Parkinson, who does not want it. What a

difference it would make to us if you lived at Park Place! The house is shut up now, and we shall not be much gayer when your aunt and uncle return. We are poorly off for neighbours, it must be confessed: however, thank goodness, we are completely independent of them; and papa and I pursue our study of natural history with unabating ardour. Isabella is still with the Ponsonbys at Hastings, but she will return to us in a fortnight. Mamma desires to be affectionately remembered by Mrs. Wellford; and Sophy unites in love and good wishes to you with your always affectionate

"MARIANNE PENNINGTON."

Rosina's feelings, on reading this letter, bordered on regret. "Certainly it would have been better," thought she, with a sigh, "if neither Lewis nor I had been quite so precipitate. He had a thousand good qualities, it must be confessed, and I begin to doubt whether there are many people either so amiable or so entertaining. He had good principles too—I sometimes doubt whether Mr. Huntley's principles are very firm—and if Lewis could not sing, it is not quite certain that Mr.

Huntley can dance. Genius is a very fine thing; but so is good temper, and it is to be doubted whether, if Mr. Huntley's temper were tried, it would prove quite equal to Lewis's. If Hannah, for instance, were to teaze him as I used to teaze Lewis! And even as to genius,—Lewis certainly had *wit*. I can recollect two or three rather clever things of his saying. One day, I remember hearing him say to Matthew, 'Many people fancy themselves capable of forgiving their enemies, who find it mighty hard to forgive their friends.' And another time, he said that Mr. Huntley would have to answer for the sin of making him love the inconstant Orpah better than the constant Ruth, and that though Ruth was crossing the desert, there could be no desert where there was Orpah."

Rosina sighed again, and folded up her letter. She shrank from the task of answering it, and resolved to postpone the duty for the present. As it was impossible to shew the letter to her mother and sister, she had some doubt whether it would not be as well to say nothing of having received it: here, however, the matter did not rest in her own hands, for Mrs. Wellford happened to have seen the postman at the gate. Rosina said as carelessly

as she could, that she was not quite at liberty to tell what Marianne had written about, and no more questions were asked, though she teazed herself by wondering how much was suspected. She mentioned her aunt Diana's illness, and it was well she did, for the next post brought Mrs. Wellford a letter from Mr. Parkinson, announcing Mrs. Diana's death. The letter was brief and rather stiff; in the course of ten days, however, it was followed by a second, much more cordially worded, stating that the bulk of Mrs. Diana's property had, as was expected, been left to her eldest niece, but that Mrs. Wellford had a legacy of eight hundred pounds. Never was legacy more opportune: Harry was now old enough to leave school, and it was high time for Matthew to visit the London hospitals. Here were funds sufficient to supply their approaching expenses, and such a world of anxiety was removed from Mrs. Wellford's mind, that she did not breathe a single impatient sigh at the difference between her sister's circumstances and her own.

Huntley found himself excluded from the cottage during the interval between Mrs. Diana's death and her burial. He was surprised at the

vacuum thus occasioned in his mind, and endeavoured to cheat the consciousness of it by longer extended rambles than he had been of late in the habit of taking, and by occasionally bestowing his idleness on Mr. Russell of whom he had lately seen little. Mr. Russell did not receive him with coldness, but there was more penetration exerted, less inclination to take Huntley's opinions on trust than formerly. Huntley found himself engaged in rather deep ethical discussions, where, conscious of his own want of power, he endeavoured to dazzle by allusion and metaphor rather than by boldly encountering his antagonist, or more frequently, let Mr. Russell have his own way after a little faint opposition, secretly wearied with the subject and wishing to lure him back to belles lettres. To his joy, he was soon re-admitted at the White Cottage, and the sight of Hannah in her mourning recompensed him for all the ennui of his banishment. But he had, for the present, lost the first place in Hannah's thoughts. Mr. Good had advised Matthew's going to town without loss of time; Matthew himself wished it; and preparations for his journey and grief at the prospect of the separation engrossed the minds of his

mother and sisters. Rosina, sanguine as was her own disposition, and dazzled by the prospect of whatever was lively or new, had the inconsistency to wonder and be a little hurt at her brother's delight at leaving Summerfield, and to think him rather unfeeling. On the evening before his journey, however, Matthew came to drink tea with his family; and while his mother and Hannah were packing up his linen, he asked Rosina to put on her bonnet and take a turn with him in the lane. She found her arm pressed rather tightly to his side, though he began by whistling a bar or two of Cherry Ripe.

"Well," said he, with a smothered sigh, "I shall not be here to-morrow evening, Rosy; nor the next, nor the next. It will be a good while before we shall meet again, and how many things may happen in the mean time! Shall I find you all such as I left you? That is more than you can tell, or I either. I wonder if this Huntley is to be my brother-in-law, after all, or not."

"Do you wish he should be, Matthew?"

"Upon my honour, Rosy, I can hardly tell you. At one time I fancied that it was *you* and he that

were in love with each other, and then I could not bear him. But now, somehow——"

"Well?"

"Now, somehow, that he is evidently attached to Hannah and that she is pleased with him, I seem to see his character in a different light. There appears to be more sincerity, more depth of feeling about him than I thought there was at first. And yet, Rosy, in spite of his wit and genius, and—*all that*,—I *cannot* feel quite cordial towards him. I cannot fancy that he is worthy of Hannah."

"Who can be, I wonder, if Mr. Huntley is not?"

"Ah Rosina, you may say so, but it is not wit and genius alone that will make a woman happy. You laugh, but I am not speaking at random. Hannah is happy now, and I could not bear ever to see her otherwise. Wit and genius alone, will not make Hannah happy. There must be temper and principle besides, and on these points I have my doubts of Huntley. He may or may not possess them, but we know very little of him. Well! things must take their course. Who knows

what may happen to *me* in the next twelvemonth? Do you recollect the queer map that Mr. Russell once shewed us,—drawn by Martin Belem,—which Columbus took with him on his first voyage? Islands, and straits, and shoals, and bays, all set down by guess—the imaginary kingdom of St. Brandan on one hand, on the other, the island of Cathay: in one place was written, "no ships can sail among these islands on account of the loadstones with which they abound;" in another, "syrens sing along these coasts."

"Yes, I recollect it. What of it?"

"Why, I am going to make a fine simile. Is not that just like the ocean of life? We expect to meet dangers and pleasures, but we cannot, with all our calculations beforehand, tell when we shall come upon them. Those we expected to meet with prove fallacious and we find others in their stead. So all the guesses we make at what will and what will not be, are about as useful to us as Martin Belem's chart to Columbus, and all we can do is, like Columbus, to set a bold face on the matter and take storms and sunshine as they are given us."

"Well, Matthew, you have made something

grand of Martin Belem at last. Be sure you write to us often."

"As often as I can; but you know, what with attending lectures, and dissecting, and walking through hospitals, and now and then perhaps going to the play, I shall not have much time to spare: therefore don't fancy because I do not write to you regularly, that I must have punctured my finger, or caught the typhus fever. I will write to you when I have leisure, and when I have anything to say—"

"Oh, you will always have plenty to say,—in London!"

"And mind that you write frequently to me too. I shall be very industrious, and very economical: my mother has been so generous that it would be a shame if I were to be otherwise. And I shall come back to see you at Christmas; and some of these days perhaps, Mr. Good may take me into partnership, or Parker of Heeley may sell his business. Harry will be in Mr. Smith's office, and my mother and Hannah will perhaps in time keep house for one of us,—for Hannah *must* not marry Huntley, Rosy!—and—"

"And why am I left out?"

"Oh! you and Sam Good—"

"Nonsense, Matthew!"

"Well then, you and Lewis Pennington—"

"Nonsense!"

"You won't hear me out. Well then; my mother and Hannah shall keep house for Harry, and you shall live with me."

"Do you mean then to be a bachelor?"

"Why not?" After a pause he added carelessly, "By the by, perhaps you do not know that the Hinckleys are going to live on the continent."

"Are they? Well, *we* shall not miss them much, that is one comfort."

Matthew began to whistle again; but this time, it was—

> "Oh no, we never mention her,
> Her name is never heard."

"How beautifully Mr. Huntley sings that song!" said Rosina.

"Does he?—See, there is Hannah beckoning to us at the gate. Come! let us have a run down the lane."

CHAPTER VII.

CRITICISMS.

Mr. Russell, with all his goodness of heart and strength of judgement, was but a man. He had his prejudices; and one day he was angry with Huntley for calling Lord Byron the greatest of modern poets.

"A great poet," replied he, "is one who purifies your mind instead of enervating or poisoning it—who either peoples this actual earth with a fair and exquisite creation of his own, or quits it altogether and soars with you into the world of intellect, leaving no misanthropic disgust, no metaphysical falsities clinging to you when he is laid aside, but making you wiser and better than you were before. Milton does this; and even in these present times, there are poets who have aimed at and achieved better things than Lord Byron, and

whom I consequently esteem better poets. They are the best who raise you highest."

This was irritating to Huntley, whose admiration of his favourite writer approached idolatry. He defended him with warmth, quoting passage after passage from Childe Harold, and exclaiming, "You cannot deny the splendour of that thought" —"you will acknowledge the beauty of this," while Mr. Russell, whose opinion of their moral, or, rather, immoral tendency, somewhat obscured his perception of their beauty, remained obstinately fixed in his original way of thinking. The discussion was dropped, but they were not quite so well pleased with each other as before; Huntley silently accusing Mr. Russell of illiberality, and Mr. Russell thinking Huntley's opinions too free.

Mr. Russell had not been often at the White Cottage lately. One morning, soon after Matthew's quitting Summerfield, he called, and found Hannah sitting to Huntley for her picture, Mrs. Wellford reading Mr. Good's daily paper, and Rosina copying one of Flaxman's illustrations of the Greek dramatists, which had been lent her by Mrs. Shivers. Mr. Russell admired the accuracy of her drawing, and began to speak of the fable

which it illustrated, and of the absurdities of the heathen mythology.

"Absurd as it was," observed Huntley, "we artists may be thankful to it for the finest sculptures in the world."

"And can you really be thankful that myriads of human beings should wallow for ages in the grossest idolatry, merely because the sculptor hence had fanciful subjects offered to his chisel?"

"Of course I spoke only in jest. Though Apollo and Venus had never been, the genius of Phidias would not have slept. No—of all absurdities it appears to me the greatest, that man should worship the work of his own hands."

"Idolatry," said Mr. Russell, "is as natural to barbarous, as infidelity is to half-civilized minds. A vivid ill-regulated imagination leads to one, and a cold sluggish imagination to the other. The man whose feelings and fancy are equally inert, sees God nowhere: the man whose lively mind is uncontrolled by knowledge and reason, sees every where, not one, but many gods. He is brought into close contact with the mighty works of creation, and is unable to fathom their laws. To him, the sun, because beyond his control, appears un-

controlled; the seasons, returning regularly, seem to do so of their own accord. And what he admires or fears, he worships: thus arise a host of imaginary deities,—'Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood,'—'Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns.' Did it ever occur to you, Mr. Huntley, as an argument against the authenticity of Ossian, that there is no mention of idolatrous worship in his poems? His gloomy chiefs erect no altars, pour no libations."

"It is enough for me," said Huntley, laughing, "that a regular epic in six books, should have been translated from manuscripts which are no where to be seen, and that his Celtic damsels are ladies of the utmost delicacy and refinement, white-handed and white-footed, in spite of exposure to the sun and air, with no more debasing employments than playing on the harp and braiding their golden hair."

"And why should not they play on the harp, and braid their hair?" said Rosina, who loved Ossian, not wisely but too well.

"If I might differ from a lady, I should say that the wives of Fingal and Ossian were more likely to have occupied themselves in sewing to-

gether their garments of skins, and dressing the game which their husbands brought from the hills."

"Ah, Mr. Huntley! and have you no admiration of Cathullin, mourning that he is unworthy to bear the shield of his fathers, or Gaul, or Fillan of the dark brown hair? And what do *you* say, Mr. Russell, to the address to the sun?"

"An imitation, gross, palpable, of the scriptural passage which describes him, coming from his chamber as a bridegroom, and rejoicing as a mighty man to run a race."

"Oh! very, very different, Mr. Russell! Think of the old, blind, melancholy man, regretful of the past, and hopeless of the future; unable to behold the sun that warms his chilly limbs, and sorrowfully saying 'thou, perhaps, art like me, for a season, thy years will have an end: thou shalt sleep in the clouds, careless of the voice of the morning.' Oh, Mr. Russell! Mr. Huntley! is there no poetry in this?"

Their looks told her that there was.

"Yes," said Mr. Russell, "whether the merit lies with you Rosina, or Macpherson, or Ossian, the picture is striking. When we think of an old

man thus bereft of his most precious faculties, and his dearest kindred, nothing left to enjoy on earth, and no hope beyond the grave,—we are almost ready to exclaim with Lord Bacon, 'I would rather believe the wildest fables of Mohammedanism, Hindooism, or the Talmud, than be an atheist.'"

"I cannot go quite so far with you as that," said Huntley. "The atheist is mistaken and unhappy, but there is something childish, degrading, in superstition."

"We are usually more indulgent, Huntley, to the vices of the day than to those which have gone out of fashion."

"The vice of the day?" said Rosina, looking rather alarmed, "do you then think atheism is common now?"

"An atheist, Rosina, is one who does not believe in the existence of a God. Now, the seeds of truth are so deeply planted in our hearts, and a certain degree of religious knowledge is so common to all, that I believe there are very few who would seriously, calmly, and decidedly avow themselves atheists; but when does infidelity take firmest root?—I should say, when the mass of

population is congregated in large cities, when factitious wants to an endless extent are created, and much time employed in satisfying those wants; when all make pretensions to freedom from prejudice, and all are acutely sensible to ridicule; when each pretends to a *knowledge of mankind*, but examines his own conscience little, and the works of nature less. Am I right, do you think? Then, the selfishness engendered by dwelling in a large community where it is impossible to sympathize with all, and each must look to his own interest,—and the suspicious temper created by frequently detecting imposition,—above all, the constant whirl of business and amusement, particularly indisposes the mind to feel any interest in religion. Again, the dread of singularity makes many pious persons try to appear like those around them, carefully avoid speaking on serious subjects, and affect to be as much engrossed by the plaything of the minute as their neighbours, when they have scarcely risen from their knees. These grow lukewarm in faith, while others, gathering strength from *their* weakness, openly make a jest of all that is sacred. Thus, as cities multiply and luxury increases, infidelity increases too."

"Very true," said Huntley, throwing aside his palette, "but now come and tell me what you think of my morning's work. How do you like my fair Moabitess?"

"Extremely; there is a moral beauty about her head which does credit both to your hand and the mind which directed it. But, Huntley, do you usually paint at the rate you have done the last two months?"

"Why?"

"Because, if you do, you must be a very exorbitant fellow in your demands, to make your profession pay tolerably."

Huntley laughed. "I certainly *have* taken this picture very leisurely. But my time has not been wasted, for I have made many sketches which will be very useful to me hereafter. I have painted the head of my landlady too, Mrs. Stokes, in burnt umber, by candle-light, and I have an unfinished study of Miss Rosina, which some of these days I mean shall rival Sir Joshua Reynolds."

"I am rather affronted by the consideration that as you have taken the likenesses of almost

every one in the neighbourhood, you have never once offered to paint *me*."

"I will sketch you out *instanter*, if you like. But I fear we shall never agree about your attitude and costume. *You* would dislike a fancy character; now *I* scorn the idea of mere portrait painting, and cannot consent to paint any thing that is not either picturesque or historical."

"Is there not something graceful in the folds of a surplice?" said Mrs. Wellford.

"Or is a plain suit of black so very hard to paint?" suggested Hannah.

"It will never do, ladies. No, no, if Mr. Russell will be a pope or a monk, or even a begging friar, we will soon strike a bargain. But if he refuses to be un-Protestanted even on canvass, I will have nothing more to say to him. A cowl, or a mitre, or he loses his head!"

"Who is that coming in?" said Mrs. Wellford, looking up, as something very gay passed the window and momentarily darkened the room.

"Miss Holland, I should guess, from the impression of the foot," said Huntley, glancing out at the moist gravel; "*Ex pede Herculem*."

Mr. Russell smiled. "Hush," said Rosina, "it is Mrs. Greenway."

Mrs. Greenway entered. She had never possessed great beauty, but what little she had, had been very well preserved, so that no one would have guessed her to have been considerably Mrs. Wellford's senior. She had not much to say for herself, although fond of talking, but she had a very good memory for the sayings of others; so that, with her pleasant smile and quiet voice, if she happened to have been lately in the company of a clever person, she could be very agreeable. The only complaint that could be made was, that as her mind was retentive rather than discriminating, she remembered as much of Miss Holland's opinions on the comparative merits of *Levantines* and *Gros-des-Indes*, as of Mr. Good's notions of the Catholic question.

One of the first inquiries made of Mrs. Greenway was a laughing question, whether she brought any news of Matthew. It was odd enough, that the first intelligence received of him after his arrival in town came through the Miss Greenways. He had taken charge of a parcel for them which he delivered in person at the house of their uncle,

a physician of tolerable repute, under whose hands the youngest Miss Greenway was at present placed for the benefit of her health. Matthew slily thought an introduction to Dr. Greenway might be no bad thing for him, and conducted himself so well as to secure a dinner invitation. The Miss Greenways wrote to tell their mother that their uncle thought Mr. Wellford a promising young man, and Matthew's first letter was in praise of the hospitalities of Bloomsbury Square; that Bloomsbury, the gentility of which he had been so heretical as to call in question.

"No, he hasn't been at my brother's lately," said Mrs. Greenway. "Oh, indeed, you have no right to complain of him if he writes to you once a week. My girls only write twice, and you know women are always better correspondents than men."

"But, Mrs. Greenway, he finds time to write to Sam Good oftener than to us. Now is not that abominable? Sam Good is always finding opportunities to walk over here, and drop hints of what Matthew tells him; just as if *we* were excluded from his confidence! Is not that too bad?"

Mrs. Greenway laughed, looked arch, and said perhaps Sam Good might have a better reason for walking over. Rosina's look of scorn highly amused Mr. Russell. Huntley, without paying Mrs. Greenway a higher compliment than a few minutes' cessation from his occupation, took up his brush, and after absently touching and retouching the foreground, soon resumed his palette in earnest. This attracted the observation of Mrs. Greenway, who came behind him to wonder and admire.

"That face looks so very natural!" said she, looking at Hannah's portrait. "As Mr. Greenway said the other day, you've snatched a grace beyond the reach of art. I should like one of my girls to be able to paint in oils, amazingly; but unluckily, Anne has no notion of drawing, and Eliza does not dare to touch a pencil, now her uncle has sentenced her to a reclining board. Dr. Greenway is a sad enemy to study and accomplishments! 'Young girls,' he says, 'do too much now-a-days—they are expected to be proficients in every thing; and for all that, I don't find that they make better wives and mistresses of

families than they did fifty years ago, when a woman was thought to be well brought up who could read her Bible and make a pudding."

Mr. Russell and Mr. Huntley instantly stood up in defence of female cultivation. Mrs. Greenway listened to them with perfect complacence, and then replied,

"Oh, I agree with you entirely. I am quite of my husband's opinion—certain things are done in the world, and certain things *must* be done in the world, or else people are singular. It won't do to say every boy need not learn Latin.—Every boy must, because every boy does, and it is the same with girls and their drawing and music. Nothing but poor Eliza's health should have made us give up her drawing, in spite of what Lady Worral has always said about our throwing away so much money on our girls' education. It was but the other day she attacked Mr. Greenway and me about it. 'Fiddle-sticks'-ends!' says she; 'what have *schoolmasters*' daughters, who have no pupils to teach,—what have *schoolmasters*' daughters, I say, to do with learning the harp and piano?' Ha, ha, ha! There's Mrs. Field, again, of Field House;

she's one of the anti-educationists, but for a different reason. It is not waste of money *she* regrets, you know, but waste of time. 'I'd have all music-books, drawing-books, and story books burned in one great heap,' says she, 'and even then, girls would have temptations enough to neglect their religious and moral duties.' Dear me! people have such odd ideas and so different, haven't they? There's Phœbe Holland—*she's* not over saving of money or time either, and I've heard her say 'La! what do accomplishments signify? pretty women are sure to be admired.'"

Mr. Russell and Mrs. Greenway took leave together; and as soon as they had quitted the garden, Rosina began to lament that "poor dear Mrs. Greenway should be so utterly at a loss for an original idea."

"Nay, she is as original and much more honest than many," said Huntley, as he drew on his gloves. "If every one were to *own* how many of their clever speeches were borrowed from others and how many they had already made use of in different companies, our estimate of their originality would wofully decline. There are as many

that live on other people's wit as on other people's fortunes. I have even heard a bon-mot unblushingly produced by a thief in the presence of the manufacturer. This good lady gives us references and authorities—it would be well if a few authors I wot of would do the same."

CHAPTER VIII.

DISSATISFACTION.

"Abused mortals! did you know
Where joy, heart's-ease, and comforts grow,
You'd scorn proud towers,
And seek them in these bowers,
Where winds sometimes perhaps our woods may shake,
But blustering care can never tempest make,
Nor murmurs e'er come nigh us,
Save of fountains that glide by us."

These old lines of Sir Henry Wotton did Huntley repeat to himself one afternoon as he sauntered towards the seat near the church-yard, and he had soon an opportunity of quoting them to Mr. Russell, who was occupying the aforesaid bench, taking what Huntley surmised to be a siesta. On hearing footsteps, however, he opened his eyes, not at all with the bewildered, dazzled look of a man who has been caught napping, and a little book fell from his knee which he picked up and put in his pocket.

"You seem, like myself, to be enjoying the *dolce far niente*," said Huntley, sitting down beside him on the bench; and then, without more preface, he began to repeat the old song of Sir Henry Wotton's, as if it had just come into his head. Mr. Russell did not know the lines, and asked whose they were, after which a little disquisition ensued on the character of the poet and the merits of his biographer. As Mr. Russell had never seen Isaac Walton's memoir, the subject soon fell to the ground; and Huntley, feeling unusually at a loss for small talk, inquired what book had engaged the vicar before he had disturbed him.

"Don't let me think I interrupt you," said he—"Go on reading by all means; read to me, if you will, for I am just in the humour."

"To fall asleep?"

"Why, that depends upon circumstances. If, indeed, the sermon should be uncommonly dull,—(for I take it for granted you have brought out nothing more enlivening than Sherlock or Tillotson,—)"

"You mistake—it is Sherlock's and Tillotson's text-book."

"The Bible?" said Huntley, slightly curling his lip. "Well,—and that is better than a sermon book, any day; full of pathos and poetry. The only pity is, that we are made to read it before our tastes are formed, which impairs our relish for it as we grow older."

"The beauty of its imagery may, by that means, lose the force of novelty," said Mr. Russell, "but when you consider how necessary it is that our minds should be imbued, from the very first, with sacred truths which in after life we may want opportunity or inclination to acquire in an equal degree, you will agree with me that this greatly counterbalances the advantage of reading the Bible for the first time at a later period of life. Indeed, so much are we the creatures of habit, that religious tastes, if not formed in childhood, seldom attain their full growth."

"Perhaps that is the reason why I am not so serious as some people," observed Huntley carelessly, "for my mother, who is one of your very good people, was prevented by ill health, from educating me during my childhood, and I was brought up in a house where devotion was by no means *à la mode*. Yet I appreciate and cherish

it in a way of my own, too. On a sunset evening or a starry night, in the depths of a forest or on the shores of the sea,

'Un non so che di flebile e soave'

has made me confess the nothingness of man and the grandeur of his Maker."

"That may be poetical, but is it religious?"

"Your interrogative is a polite way of hinting that it is *not*," said Huntley, laughing. "I have not forgotten that I am sitting next to an Artium Magister. Surely you are liberal enough to grant that the Almighty may best be worshipped through his works?"

"Through his works—I believe I understand you. No, I am not so liberal, as you term it. That is good, but there is something better. He may best be worshipped by obedience to his laws. I maintain that no poetical feeling, can compensate for the absence of self subjection."

"You maintain!" repeated Huntley, rather sarcastically, as if imagining a reproof to be implied.

"Nay, here is my authority," said Mr. Russell, looking down on his Bible.

"Oh, spare me chapter and verse. The obedience you talk of is impossible,—because—"

"Why?"

"Nay, you shall not provoke me to argue predestination and free-will with you.—You are armed at all points. But entire obedience is impossible; first, because there are a thousand different opinions on the meaning of the laws themselves, and secondly, because there is a warring spirit within us, which leads us to disobey them."

"All the divine precepts are contained in a very small portion of the little volume which I grasp in my hand: the laws of our country, Mr. Huntley, fill some hundreds of volumes, and employ some thousands of brains in comprehending them. Yet are good citizens no where found?—and does the warring spirit of hunger which makes a man steal a leg of mutton excuse him in the eyes of his countrymen? What becomes of your argument?"

It was impossible to chain Huntley down to any thing like a serious discussion. The easy brilliant way in which he handled amusing trifles made many give him credit for depth of mind; but as soon as any thing unconnected with pleasure or interest required serious thought, he flew off from the point.

Taking the Bible from Mr. Russell and turning

over its leaves, something caught his eye which he read with great interest; and while the vicar was expecting some specious difficulty to be started, "What poem, ancient or modern, can surpass the book of Ruth?" exclaimed he. "I am glad the idea struck me of illustrating it! How exquisite is the feminine devotedness of this speech!—'Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried.' Exquisite Ruth!—If *my* Ruth, now, would say as much to me!—I have a great mind, Russell," said he, laughing, "to make you my confidant."

"Stop!" cried Mr. Russell with a sudden emphasis which made Huntley start, "I wish for no confidence. My suspicions are my own; they may be founded or unfounded; but you must act for yourself."

"Certainly I had no idea of offending you by the offer of my confidence," said Huntley, looking surprised and hurt.

"You have *not* offended me; but confidence implies certain duties on the part of the confidant, which I am not altogether inclined to fulfil."

"What duties?"

"Secrecy,—sympathy,—assistance."

"Assistance I do not want," said Huntley proudly; "secrecy is not altogether indispensable, nor very hard to maintain if it were; and sympathy, Mr. Russell, though our acquaintance cannot boast very ancient date, I own I did not expect you to refuse. Well—I am sorry for this; it seemed to me that we understood each other. What am I to think, then? That we are rivals?"

Mr. Russell was silent.

"Enemies, perhaps?"

"No, Huntley, far, far from it. I have derived much more pleasure from your society than mine could possibly bestow in return. Why should we say any more on the subject? Let us each be satisfied to pursue our own paths, and continue to enjoy friendly companionship, without bestowing or seeking confidences which might probably lead to disapprobation and disappointment."

"As you will," said Huntley, looking proudly resigned; and, after a short pause, "Six o'clock!" exclaimed he as the church clock struck, "I must not loiter here any longer. Mrs. Wellford made me promise to drink tea with her. A pleasant

evening to you." And humming an opera song, he walked down the hill.

Mr. Russell remained on the seat under the lime tree, watching the young painter till he vaulted over a style and disappeared behind a hedge. Then he gave a deep sigh. "How many attaching qualities does that young man possess!" said he mentally; "and yet how little steadiness and religious principle form the basis of his character! He is governed solely by feeling, and as long as that is good, so long and no longer his virtue exists. And shall such a character rule the destiny of Hannah? Will she, temperate and right-judging as she is, be dazzled by the shining qualities of one with principles so tottering? Or rather, *can* Huntley fail of success with any woman capable of feeling the omnipotence of genius? And *I* never foresaw the danger! And I might have prevented it!"

With a second sigh, deeper and more impatient than the first, Mr. Russell started up and returned to the vicarage.

CHAPTER IX.

A BACHELOR'S REVERIES.

"HAVE you been sketching, this afternoon?" inquired Rosina of Huntley, as he joined them at the tea table.

"No," said he with a smile, "I have been better employed."

"Indeed! how so?"

"What do you think of my sitting under an old tree, reading the bible with Mr. Russell?"

"Are you in earnest?"

"Quite so, I assure you. Now do not laugh at me!"

"Laugh!" repeated Hannah with unusual energy.

"No, I need fear no ridicule here, I am well assured; though among certain town acquaintance, I should have not escaped so easily."

"What a cowardly weapon satire is!" exclaimed Hannah.

"Yes: the old laws of chivalry forbad a warrior to strike at the arms or legs of his opponent: it would be as well if there was some moral rule answering to this in the code of the satirist, permitting him to lash crimes and follies unsparingly, but forcing him to respect what is good and useful."

Hannah looked pleased, and this short dialogue did more for Huntley than many of his most brilliant flashes of wit. From this time, Mr. Russell often met the lovers, as they must now be called, strolling through the pleasant lanes and meadows of Summerfield; and the smiling happiness of Hannah's downcast look, made his heart ache more than the triumphant glance of Huntley's black eyes. These were now the only occasions on which they met; for Mr. Russell was no longer a frequent visitor at the White Cottage; and it was remarked that he seemed grave and unhappy. Mrs. Wellford marvelled what had estranged him from her family; and Rosina, now left pretty much to herself, became rather impatient at the absence of the only person who had lately seemed to think

her worth particular attention. If, however, Mr. Russell vexed the mother and daughter by his unsociability, he punished himself much more. Attached to intelligent female society, and disposed to look to women for sympathy and amusement, yet unblessed by the companionship of wife, mother, or sister, it was in vain that this obstinate man sought for counterbalancing interest and employment among his books. If a clever remark occurred to him, he had no one who could benefit by it, and admire his ingenuity at the same time; nay, the pen often fell from his hand while his wandering thoughts pursued a channel as ill adapted as could well be imagined, to edify the parishioners for whom he was inditing a sermon. Molly White remarked that "master had never been so hard to please, or she might say, so impossible to please at all; for if she sent up his veal cutlet ever so nice, he did not say it was well dressed, nor even seem to relish it." One day, after reading a passage of Hartley six times without understanding it, he threw the book aside and sallied forth with the air of a man who had formed a courageous resolution, muttering to himself, "I am weak as well as wrong in remaining passive; both

duty and inclination call on me to speak." Acting on this conviction, Mr. Russell walked down the lane till he came within sight of Mrs. Wellford's gate, when his ardour began to cool, and he asked himself, "What are the motives at this moment influencing me? Am I not practising self-deception, and choosing to believe that I am undertaking a necessary duty, when in fact my interference is owing to jealousy and selfishness?" Alas! Mr. Russell could not answer the question to his mind; and seeing no inviting faces at the windows, he passed the gate with a sigh, and pursued the windings of the lane. On reaching the foot of the chalk hills, his bitter meditations on the past and the future were given up for thoughts of the present, when he saw Hannah and Huntley coming down a steep and narrow path; he standing a little below her, and holding her hand to enable her to make use of the precarious footing with safety, while she, with cheeks glowing with timidity, health, and exercise, was smiling assent to something he was saying. Before them, in chase of a little dog, ran Rosina, fearless of danger, her straw bonnet blown back, and her brown ringlets scattered over her face and throat.

"What a coward you are, Hannah!" exclaimed she, looking back and laughing; and at the same moment, her foot slipped on the wet chalk, and Mr. Russell was just in time to save her from a sprained ancle. "Thank you," said she, recovering herself with celerity. "It was lucky for me, Mr. Russell, that you were at hand! Come here, Dash! Do look at my little dog—this is a new acquisition of mine; Phœbe Holland gave him to me. Did you ever see such a curly little thing in your life? I love him beyond any thing, but he has a terrible trick of running away."

"He won't do that, I dare say, Rosina, when he knows you as well as I do," said Mr. Russell, trying to smile, as they were joined by Hannah and Huntley.

"Thank you for the compliment, Mr. Russell; I don't recollect your ever paying me so fine a one before; but you really cannot think what a troublesome little animal this is. Now I will just give you a specimen of the way in which he has worried me already. On Monday,—no, on Tuesday,—we took him out with us, and he ran away from us just by Mrs. Stokes's cottage. Well, all Mr. Huntley's whistling would not

bring him back; and I was determined not to lose him. I ran after him, all across Mr. Holland's fields, till he actually took refuge in the stable! The very same afternoon, we were out again, and all at once Mr. Huntley missed him without our having any idea where he could be. I had not the smallest notion which way to turn, so Mr. Huntley proposed that he should go one way and I the other, which we accordingly did; and after half an hour's useless hunting, tired enough I was when I reached the place we had settled on for a rendezvous! Mr. Huntley had been much farther than I had, but he had got back soonest, and was resting himself quite exhausted on the seat where Hannah had been waiting for us; and all this was for nothing, for where do you think Dash was, after all?—Safe at home in the parlour! and I can't think who had shut him up, for mamma was at Mrs. Greenway's, and Betty declared nobody had been in the house since we had left it. And yet Mr. Huntley is as fond of this tiresome little pet as I am, and will not come out without him on any account."

Rosina's stories of her dog lasted till they reached a small cottage, where Mr. Russell wished

his companions good morning. "How excessively grave and austere Mr. Russell has become, lately!" exclaimed Rosina as soon as he had entered the cottage; "he quite puts one in mind of melancholy Jacques! I cannot think what is the matter with him."

"Nor I," said Huntley. "My opinion of him has changed. I still believe him sensible and well principled, but I no longer think him good humoured."

Hannah gently defended Mr. Russell from the charge of ill humour. Something vexatious might have happened, she pleaded, to cloud his spirits, but she had had opportunities for many years, of judging of his temper, which had always stood the test. It was hard to accuse him of ill humour because he could not appear to relish pleasantry which perhaps he might feel to be ill timed.

Lady Worral called in the course of the afternoon. After inquiring whether Matthew and "her boy," as she always called Harry, had lately been heard of, she put poor Hannah to the blush, by saying in a significant manner, "Well, Hannah, when is it to be?"

And when Hannah, in a voice that seemed to dread an answer, faultered "What does your ladyship mean?" she replied with a noisy laugh, "Why, your wedding, to be sure! Every body says it is a settled thing."

Rosina's colour mounted, for her sister, and Hannah looked to her mother for assistance.

"Every body seems much better informed on the subject than we are," said Mrs. Wellford calmly, "but pray who does 'every body' in the present case happen to be?"

"Oh, I can give you my authorities! Mrs. Good and Mrs. Greenway."

"And will your ladyship be kind enough to tell us what day they have fixed on for Hannah's wedding?"

"That's the very question Mrs. Good asked me this morning."

"Oh! then it appears that 'every body' does not *say* it is a settled thing, but wishes to know when it *will* be a settled thing! You need not make yourself uneasy, Hannah. Perhaps, when Harry comes from school, we may hear as ingenious reports set afloat concerning him and Fanny Good."

Lady Worral laughed, and asked them to drink tea with her. Mrs. Wellford accepted the invitation, and her ladyship terminated the visit, saying she should expect to see Mr. Huntley with them.

CHAPTER X.

PURSE NETTING.

Mr. Russell and the Goods helped to form the usual coterie at Lady Worral's. The shortening evenings now precluded those who were not fond of cards from having recourse to a ramble in the park; and as soon as the whist table was opened, Mr. Russell asked Huntley if he played chess.

"Yes," said he, "Miss Wellford has just asked me the same question, and I have challenged her to a game."

"It seems then," said Mr. Russell to Rosina with an air of resignation, "that you and I must be contented to be the only idle ones of the party."

"I am not going to be idle, I assure you," replied she, "for I have brought my netting."

"Have you? Then I am reduced to seek for entertainment in the Morning Post. Perhaps *you* would like to hear 'who's in, who's out; who loses

and who wins.'" And drawing one of the candles nearer to him, Mr. Russell read out occasional articles of miscellaneous intelligence which he thought likely to amuse Rosina, till an epistle signed Clericus caught his attention, and left his companion reduced to her own resources for entertainment. At length, Mr. Russell laid down the paper, and gave rather a deep sigh.

"That is a pretty purse you are making, Rosina," said he quickly, as she looked up from her netting, "do you mean it for me?"

"No, indeed I do not! It is bespoken and promised already."

"For some more favoured swain than myself, I suppose," rejoined he, in a tone so different from gaiety that Rosina raised her eyes in surprise. He was looking at the chess players, but as there was nothing extraordinary in this, the gravity which overspread his countenance was unaccountable.

"Don't be uneasy," said Rosina, laughing, "the purse is for mamma, and if you are really in want of one, the next which I net shall be for you."

"Thank you, thank you," said he, moving his

chair so as no longer to face Huntley, and stooping to examine Rosina's netting with an air of interest; "but surely, this mixture of colours will be too gay for one of my years and profession."

"What will you have, then? Blue, the colour of hope!"

"I pray thee, gentle lady, mock me not. What can a forlorn fellow like myself have to do with hope?"

"Well then, green or yellow?"

"No, no, that would remind me of the melancholy which devoured Viola's poor sister. Besides, those colours stand for jealousy, do they not? I would not wear the symbols of so odious a passion."

"Perhaps black would suit you?"

"Nay, I have enough of black already; I need not put my purse into mourning."

"Violet, then?"

"Violet,—yes, I like that colour, I am fond of violets; yet violet colour is mourning, too, you know, in France,—court mourning. What think you of brown?"

"Oh, dismal to a degree!"

"To a degree! That is quite a young lady's

expression.—Well, cannot we find any colour to please both of us? What say you to crimson?"

"Yes, crimson will look very well."

"Then crimson let it be, since I see you are resolved on making me very gay."

"I wish I could," said Rosina with a smile.

"Hey?—what do you mean?"

"Oh!—nothing," replied she, pursuing her work.

"Fie, Rosina, I am sure you are too sensible to talk at random."

"Indeed, Mr. Russell, I meant nothing very deep. I said I wished I could make you gay, because I am fond of gaiety myself and like other people to be gay, and you have seemed rather the reverse lately—that is all, I assure you."

"Have you observed it?" said he in a lower voice. "It is true enough, but I did not suppose any one had noticed it—you are very quick-sighted." And with a sigh, Mr. Russell had again recourse to the Morning Post. "Ha!" exclaimed he, "my cousin Frank has returned from Switzerland! An idle young acquaintance has applied to him for bail. I suppose I shall hear from him soon."

"Has Frank returned?" said Huntley, looking up from the chess-board. "I shall have some curiosity to see his portfolio. He sketches beautifully, though he leaves his drawings unfinished. Perhaps I may run over to Switzerland next year myself, though Florence and Rome have more attractions for me.—Should *you* like to see Switzerland?" said he in a softer tone, to Hannah.

"Here's 'a medical gentleman near London *desirous* of receiving an insane inmate to be treated as one of the family,'" said Mr. Russell, "A curious taste, he must have, Rosina! 'Clotilda, queen of the Franks, a tragedy.'—It is a singular fact that women should have changed the religion of the greater part of Europe.—This Clotilda introduced Christianity into France; the sister of the emperor Henry the Second did the same for Hungary, the duchess of Poland for the Poles, and queen Olga for the Russians. You may be proud of the spiritual achievements of your sex.—Pray, have you heard from your friend Marianne Pennington lately?"

"About ten days ago—you know Lewis is gone to Germany?"

"Yes, he wrote me word of his intentions soon after he returned to Stoke Barton."

"Marianne's letter was little more than a lecture on what is just now her favourite pursuit,—natural history."

"Ah! she is a pupil of the doctor's. He must be very glad to have some one to sympathise with him in his darling study. Many a time have I seen him, on returning from a walk, unfold his handkerchief, and display a collection of beetles, caterpillars, mosses, stones, and hedge plants, with something interesting to tell of each. What I particularly admire is the humanity with which he treats his live curiosities. But Rosina, allow me to hold that skein of silk for you. You are entangling it terribly."

This was unusual gallantry on the part of Mr. Russell, and Rosina found much subject for mirth in the awkward manner in which he performed his office. She mischievously attributed every knot to his faulty manner of holding the silk, which he maintained no one could do better; and the whist players looked round to see what occasioned so much laughter. Somehow Mr. Russell

forgot his melancholy, and was remarkably lively and animated all the rest of the evening.

At eleven o'clock the vicar and the painter escorted Mrs. Wellford and her daughters through the Park; Mrs. Good followed, attached to her husband's arm by one hand, while the other held her dress cap, nicely pinned up in a handkerchief. Mr. Good was always rather sore on the point of Lady Worral's no-supper system; and on entering his own house, he ordered up the tray, and helped himself to a biscuit and a glass of wine. While thus engaged, he summoned his wife's attention to the following warning.

"My dear, you must take care you do not catch the influenza that is going about."

"Influenza, Mr. Good?" repeated she. "I did not know there was one in Summerfield. Why did not you mention it before?"

"I did not think, my dear, it would spread in the degree it is doing."

"I am extremely sorry to hear such a disorder is prevailing! Why did you not set Lady Worral on her guard?"

"I consider her ladyship rather too old to stand a chance of being attacked."

"I hope the children will not catch it. Do you think I had better keep them in the house?"

"No—I should rather trust to their youth—when their turn comes, neither you nor I shall be able to prevent it."

"Really you alarm me. Who has it?"

"I think Hannah Wellford is sickening, to a certainty."

"Dear, I am very sorry for it! What symptoms did you perceive?"

"Certain symptoms about the eyes. There was Mr. Huntley, too—"

"Indeed?—I hope we have not caught it, my dear."

"I hope not. It is sometimes very violent in its attacks, though some persons take it very quietly, and I think Hannah Wellford will very likely be among the number. I don't believe in its ever proving fatal, myself; though much has been written to prove the contrary. That nice young man,—what was his name?—who was staying at the vicarage—"

"Lewis Pennington?"

"Aye, the same—*He* carried the influenza away with him, it is my opinion; though nothing was more likely to cure him than change of—air."

"To be sure, I recollect now that he complained of feverishness and headache, the last time we saw him, at Mr. Holland's, and you know he was obliged to quit the party—Did that make you suspect he had the influenza?"

"Yes, Mrs. Good, it did. And now, here is Mr. Russell—"

"Upon my word, Sam, I do not know what to make of you—Mr. Russell was perfectly well this evening."

"My dear, don't interrupt me. What should you know of symptoms? I do not say he is positively attacked by the disease at this moment, but I think it is lurking about him. Did not you perceive a kind of languor, lassitude, dejection, and nervous twitching—?"

"Why, now you mention it, I think I did."

"A kind of heaviness, as if from oppression somewhere about the chest,—a wandering of the eye—"

"Yes,—true."

"That was at the beginning of the evening.

Afterwards, his spirits, without any apparent cause, became feverishly high, his cheek flushed, his eye brilliant—"

"Really, Sam, I wish I knew whether you are laughing at me or not?"

"Laughing, my dear! 'Tis no laughing matter to poor Mr. Russell, I assure you! He's a marked man."

"I wish, Mr. Good, you would tell me in earnest, what are the symptoms. Are they inflammatory?"

"I should rather say—amatory."

Here Mrs. Good fell into such a fit of laughing that her husband began to doubt whether she would ever recover. As soon, however, as she succeeded in regaining her composure, she said, "Do you actually mean to say that you think Mr. Russell is in love?"

"My dear, I cannot pretend to see farther into a mill-stone than any one else; but the *simple* state of affairs in the village at present, reminds me of Cruickshank's laughable illustration of the Golden Goose, where the man runs after the maid, the parson after the man, the clerk after the parson, and so on to the end of the chapter. It

seems to me that Pennington is in love with Rosina, Rosina with Huntley, Huntley with Hannah, and Mr. Russell, with—which of the two sisters I am not quite sure."

"As if there could be a doubt!—That is, if he be in love at all, which, really, I can hardly imagine."

"And why not? He is still a young man."

"His habits seemed so fixed—And what hindered his stepping forward before, when he had the field to himself?"

"Ah, Fanny, that we must account for on the principle of opposition. That we may have, we won't have, and that we can't have, we will have. Till Huntley came, Mr. Russell thought he might have Hannah any day he chose to ask her, and so he never asked her till it was too late."

"*I* think he would not be too late now," cried Mrs. Good. "I will lay you any wager—"

"My dear, I never lay wagers."

"Well!—we shall see."

"Yes," said Mr. Good, as he deliberately collected the fragments of the last biscuit; "time will shew! We shall see;—we shall see!"

CHAPTER XI.

NEW LIGHTS.

WHATEVER doubt might be felt as to the nature of Mr. Russell's interest in Hannah Wellford, the depth of it admitted none. He was also very uneasy at having been the cause of Huntley's intimacy with the Wellford family, while so little was known of his character. Every one seemed to take him on trust; and Mr. Russell was almost provoked with Mrs. Wellford for relying with such easiness on his having been the introducer, as a gage for Huntley's honour. He had, indeed, early satisfied some compunctious visitings on this score by writing a letter of inquiry to his cousin Frank; but after vainly expecting an answer for several weeks, he learnt that Frank had set off some time before on a tour through Switzerland ere his letter could have reached him; and Huntley's increasing intimacy with the Wellfords, in the mean-

while, had rendered it more difficult and invidious to put them on their guard; while greater opportunities of judging of his habits and opinions, made the anxious vicar still more suspicious that much which was taken for granted, existed only on the surface. These were the doubts and difficulties which had lately withheld him from the White Cottage, where he had not quite temper enough to behold Huntley familiarly established.

On the morning after Lady Worral's tea party, Mr. Russell was not a little pleased by the receipt of a thick packet from his cousin Frank. "All suspicions will at length be banished or confirmed," thought he, as he tore off the envelope. The young artist's letter was as follows:

"Greek Street, September 25th.

"DEAR RUSSELL,

"Only two days returned from a most enchanting three months' ramble which has enriched my portfolio with sketches innumerable, and my memory with subjects for many a dream

"On summer eve by haunted stream."

"Had you accompanied me, knapsack on shoul-

der, you would certainly have laughed, when scenes more beautiful than my imagination had ever conceived, made me dance and almost shout with ecstasy; and as I can't bear to be ridiculed when the fit is on me, it is lucky that you were not within sight and earshot. So here is a letter from you that has been lying on my writing table ever since June 12th! With regard to this young Huntley you have written to me about, I suppose by this time you can say

> "He has come, he is gone; we have met,
> And may meet, perhaps, never again;"

or at any rate you have had abundant time to make out his character for yourself, so that any attempt to delineate it now, will be useless. A fascinating young fellow he certainly is, as of course you have discovered; and though rather lax in some of his notions, by no means so bad as to run away with any of the lambkins of your little flock—provided papa and mamma keep a prudent look-out. In short, the only"——

"September 28th.

"I was interrupted here by a friend, who carried me off to see a capital Guido just imported.

A thousand things have occupied me since, and among others, I have called on Mrs. Huntley. Perhaps you know Huntley has a mother and sister—the latter, a charming creature, fair, gentle, and elegant. From *them*, I learnt that Huntley is still at Summerfield; and what keeps him so long in such an obscure place, they can only guess, as he never favours them with very communicative letters. Emmeline, however, (that is his sister,) suspects there is some attachment in the case; as he has sent to her for music, Italian books, and I know not what besides, all evidently for *female* accommodation. She says she hopes it may be so, as she thinks Arthur would be a better and a happier man if he were united to a wife whom he thoroughly esteemed as well as loved. And as there thus appears some probability that he actually *does* meditate stealing one of your lambkins, I may as well tell you all I know of him from first to last, of which information you can then make what use seemeth good. To tell the truth, I began this sheet intending to dismiss the matter in a brace of sentences, and to devote the remaining space to a rapturous description of the Vaudois. But having broken the

chain of my ideas, and beginning to take some interest in the subject in hand, you shall have the whole story without further preamble.

"Huntley is by birth a gentleman; and his talents as you must have discovered, are of the first order. He unites industry to genius, and it is therefore probable that he will rise to considerable eminence in his profession. His father married a very beautiful and amiable young woman, whose rank in life was not equal to his own;—the daughter of some music master or tutor, I believe,—I am not sure which. This *mésalliance* offended his family, who would never take the smallest notice of him, nor of his widow and children after his death. Will you believe it? Huntley is very sore on this point, and cannot forgive his mother for being, as he considers her, the cause of his being confined to a rank beneath that in which he is entitled to shine! Captain Huntley left his widow two or three hundred a year, on which she managed to live respectably in a cheap part of the country. Unluckily she had, previous to this time, and in the hope of conciliating her husband's relations, given up the charge of her son to an old aunt of Captain Huntley's, the only member of the family

who had not utterly cast him off; and thus, the opportunity was lost of riveting the boy's affections on his mother and attaching him to home. The old lady brought him up very injudiciously, spoilt him by indulgence, exerted no controul over his temper, and taught him to hate and despise his mother's family. The worst of it was that being literally one of the children of this world, she endowed him with no religious principle. Luckily for Huntley, this old beldame died when he was about twelve years old; but she did all the harm she could by leaving what little property she had, to become his on attaining majority, while the interest meantime was to defray the expenses of his education and supply him with pocket money. Huntley was now sent to school for a few years, and his holidays instead of being spent at a luxurious home, were passed beneath the humble roof of his mother. His predilection for painting had early shewn itself, and as no one united the wish with the power to alter his determination in the choice of a profession, he became a pupil of one of our best artists. As he boarded with his teacher, Mrs. Huntley had little opportunity of watching the bent of his mind, or endea-

vouring to controul it; but at the expiration of his studies, she quitted her Welsh cottage for the purpose of keeping house for him in town. It soon became evident how ill they would agree together. Mrs. Huntley blamed her son for the expensive elegancies with which she found him surrounded, and which, though by no means out of the way to London eyes, were quite the reverse to one who had long been confined within a narrow income; but as Huntley had just attained possession of his legacy, he laughed at her remonstrances. Moreover, Mrs. Huntley, who may be rather over-strict in her religious notions, was shocked at the laxity of her son's principles and practice. Much reproof on her part and ridicule on his, was the consequence; and he sought refuge from her attempts at his conversion, in gayer society. So attractive are Huntley's manners that he was welcomed and sought out, not only by brother artists of similar tastes and habits, but by many men of superior rank, at whose convivial meetings he was a favoured guest. Thus courted and flattered, no wonder that he learnt to believe it was at home alone he was undervalued. Female smiles also had some influence over him;

aristocratic beauty, if studio gossip speaks true, bewildered his heart as well as his eyes, and there is some story of a painter's beautiful daughter having died of disappointment, because the person to whom she was engaged,—changed his mind! As this has not come to my own knowledge, however, I pass it over. But certain it is, that to keep pace with his gay friends, Huntley plunged into every kind of dissipation, and that his affairs became much involved. His mother assisted him with her slender purse; but this generosity, though it touched him with momentary gratitude, could not enhance his relish for the atmosphere of home. He never could help feeling or fancying that there was a taint of vulgarity about his mother, and was repelled by what he termed inelegance and *gaucherie* in his sister, though the faults of both existed only in his fastidious imagination, and Miss Huntley, especially, is one of the most naturally graceful and elegant creatures that ever breathed. The moment the brush was laid down, he sought for stimulus abroad, among his friends, at the opera, or the theatre. Thus affairs went on till some misunderstanding more serious than usual, occasioned a total rupture between the mother and son, and

it was mutually determined that they should part. Mrs. Huntley took a small house near Dulwich, and her son engaged lodgings in a fashionable street where he has remained ever since. A reconciliation was with infinite difficulty, patched up by Emmeline, but no peace between such opposite characters can be entire or lasting. Such is the history of my gay and gifted friend, who, it seems, is making such havoc among you at Summerfield. Upon my honour, he must be deeply enamoured, to have lowered his crest to a level with the best of your village maidens; he, who swooped at the highest game! If you had any sisters of your own, I should venture a word or two of caution; but as that is not the case, why should I puzzle or concern myself for some one who may after all only turn out to be a lady of the mist, a beauteous exhalation of a whimsical fancy? or why should I pursue the invidious task of dilating on the errors of a young man in whose company I have passed many gay, if not many wise hours? I can't think what ails my spirits to-day. This villainous thick London air! who can breathe in it, after knowing what it is to respire a mountain breeze? Art seems

stagnant—half the academicians are foraging for new subjects, in and out of the country, and the rest are dozing while the oil dries on their pallets. No parliament sitting for the good of the nation, nor beauties for the good of our purses —no new books, no new faces, no new conspiracies or murders. The newspaper-mongers must be living on the gain of a dead loss!—After all, Huntley has discovered a secret worth knowing to epicures of excitement; the best amusement in such times as these is falling in love! *Vive l'amour, le campagne, et la beauté!*

"Thy loving kinsman,

"FRANK RUSSELL."

Mr. Russell's first thought on finishing this letter, was to shew it to Mrs. Wellford. He would thus disencumber his conscience of a heavy weight; she would be the responsible agent; and if she chose to persist in encouraging Huntley as the suitor of her daughter, it would be with open eyes.

Accordingly, at about the time when he thought Mrs. Wellford most likely to be at leisure, he left his house; and close to the church-yard gate fell

in with Hannah and Rosina. The unexpected sight of the person he was thinking of and the certainty that he should find Mrs. Wellford at home without chance of interruption, made him speak to the girls with a degree of hurry which much amused Rosina, who pondered for ten minutes on the cause of Mr. Russell's perturbation. On their return, she was surprised to see her mother with red eyes.

Mrs. Wellford had had a discussion and almost a dispute with Mr. Russell. On his proceeding, after certain circumlocutory prefaces, to tell her in plain English, that soon after his becoming acquainted with Mr. Huntley, he had written to his cousin Frank to inquire into the respectability of the young man, and that he had brought her the tardy reply in case she felt any curiosity as to its contents, Mrs. Wellford thanked him very heartily for the offer, adding something which she left unfinished as she hastily opened the proffered letter, about its becoming now important to learn as much of Mr. Huntley's habits and connexions as possible. Mr. Russell watched her countenance, and saw it cloud very deeply as she read the second and third pages of Frank's foolscap

sheet; and when she had finished it, she leant her head upon her hand, and the tears trickled through her fingers. But, wiping these hastily away, she took up the letter again, observing to Mr. Russell that she was vexing herself very foolishly, for that on consideration, the greater part of what Mr. Frank Russell had stated amounted to little. And then, going over it from the beginning, she made her own remarks as she went along; observing in the first place, that Mr. Huntley's education having been committed to a very injudicious preceptress was his misfortune rather than his fault, and that if, in after life, he had done as much as possible to rectify his youthful errors, it was as much as could be expected, and more than many young men would effect. Secondly that his choice of a profession, which was so much less likely to attract ambition and vanity than the army or the law, and his industrious pursuit of it, spoke much in his favour. Thirdly, that the luxuries of which Mrs. Huntley complained, were such as, the writer acknowledged, were common to London eyes. Fourthly, that ill judged attempts at conversion, and trite moralizing, were likely enough to disgust a young man with his home, which it should

have been his mother's business to make pleasant to him. Fifthly, that it was probable that Mrs. and Miss Huntley's manners *were* vulgar, and their minds narrow and common place, notwithstanding Mr. Frank Russell's opinion to the contrary. And sixthly—*now*, Mrs. Wellford owned, they were coming to the real difficulties of the case,—it was natural that a young man of genius just one and twenty, should be rather thoughtless in his use of a legacy. It appeared that his mother had paid his debts, which *could not* have been very great, since her own income was only two hundred pounds.

Mr. Russell corrected her—three hundred.

Well, three hundred. "Two or three hundred a year." However, Mr. Huntley's embarrassments must be inquired into, as well as this story of the painter's daughter, whenever he should propose for Hannah. As he had not yet done this, to the best of Mrs. Wellford's belief, and as Hannah was not a girl to give away her affections unasked, any such inquiry at present would be rather premature, though she was much obliged to Mr. Russell for the interest he seemed to take in her daughter's welfare. As to the story of the painter's

daughter, she owned she *should* like to have that cleared up at once, for the gratification of her own curiosity, and it would most likely turn out to be an error. Mr. Russell might take notice, his cousin did not vouch for it. Perhaps Mr. Russell would have the kindness to write once more to his cousin on the subject, and to ask him to sift it to the bottom, without leading him to infer that any one but himself was interested in the inquiry. Ten to one, it would prove an ill-natured story. It was not unlikely that Mr. Frank Russell saw far less into Mr. Huntley's real character than she did. Idle chit chat in studios, auction rooms, theatres, and dinner parties, just at the time when men were busy or seeking relief from business, could afford much less opportunity of judging of the mind and heart than the daily routine of quiet country life, where there was no excitement, no false glare, no temptation to be striving to appear more worldly than in reality.

Mr. Russell was quite taken by surprise by the flow of Mrs. Wellford's eloquence. He had had no idea of finding her heart so completely in Huntley's cause. That she should weigh every thing well before admitting its truth and import-

ance was perfectly natural, but there was an accent of displeasure at his interference, a tone of coolness, for which he had been wholly unprepared. That "thanking him for the interest he *seemed* to take in her daughter," cut him to the heart. Mr. Russell made use of the first opportunity of speaking which the lady allowed him, with more warmth than on any occasion recorded; he spoke of Hannah's simplicity, of Hannah's inexperience, of Hannah's happiness at stake, with so much energy as to dissolve Mrs. Wellford in tears. But she could not give up Huntley. No: she was so certain that he really was well principled, that his heart was good, that his heart was devoted to Hannah! Hannah, so good, so attractive, so charming! Hannah to lose her first, her only lover,—one who *seemed* at least, to deserve her, through the misrepresentations of one who had written in idleness or in malice! Mrs. Wellford wondered to herself, with a little bitterness, how it was that Mr. Russell had kept this marvellous interest in Hannah's welfare so quietly asleep till Hannah had nearly reached the age of twenty-three!

In short, the interview was unsatisfactory. One

would not, and one could not, be convinced; and yet, though Mrs. Wellford declared she laid not the smallest stress on Mr. Frank Russell's communications, they had had the effect of making her very unhappy; and she renewed her request that Mr. Russell would write again to his cousin. He promised that he would, and quitted the White Cottage more surprised and disappointed at Mrs. Wellford's conduct than, an hour before, he could have believed possible. "She is wilfully, childishly blind!" thought he, "blind to her daughter's best interests. And all for the sake of seeing a daughter married! The only thing mothers care for, from first to last!" If ever Mr. Russell was in an ill humour, it was on this blessed day.

CHAPTER XII.

CROSS PURPOSES.

Mrs. Wellford brooded over all that had passed, and alternately trembled for Hannah's happiness, found excuses for Huntley, and fretted at Mr. Russell's doubts and prophecies, till at length, an idea darted into her head, which atoned for all the vicar's *brusquerie*, accounted for his warmth, and elucidated much which had hitherto been mysterious. He must certainly be himself attached to Hannah; and downright jealousy had occasioned all this curious investigation of Huntley's early history. Though this by no means cleared Huntley of the errors laid to his charge, and left Mrs. Wellford as anxious and doubtful as ever, whether he were worthy of Hannah, she could not help feeling a glow of pride at the idea of her daughter's conquest of such a man as the vicar. In the afternoon, when Rosina observed

"how very oddly Mr. Russell had behaved in the morning, and indeed, how strange and unaccountable he had been for some time," Mrs. Wellford smiled with great significance, and remarked that his conduct really *was* unaccountable, unless he were in love. And on Rosina's exclaiming, "Surely, that would be too ridiculous!" her mother replied with the oracular observation that "Stranger things had happened." Rosina coloured, and kept her surprise to herself. Somehow it never occurred to her that Hannah could have two admirers.

Within a day or two, Mr. Russell happened to have business at Heeley, and on returning through the town, he saw the Miss Wellfords in the principal shop, parcel haberdasher's, parcel chemist's, parcel librarian's. He went in, and found Hannah buying gloves, and Huntley and Rosina amusing themselves with examining the contents of the bookshelves, which contained three sets of travels, and twenty novels. Huntley was diverting himself with culling the choice passages scored in pencil or with thumb-nails, by milliners' apprentices, and marked by such encomiums as "Excellent!—how affecting!—how true to nature," &c.

Rosina was deep in one of the Scotch novels, which she declared she must take home "to amuse mamma;" and, to gratify her filial piety, Mr. Russell dropped two volumes into one pocket and a third into the other. Thus ballasted, he drew her arm within his, observing that it was now her duty to beguile the weariness of his journey homeward. Huntley told her that she had selected the least worthy of Sir Walter's works, but added that *his* worst was better than most men's best, and that for his own part, he loved even his faults. Mr. Russell observed that this was letting partiality have too much influence over judgment.

"And would you always have partiality kept within the bounds of judgment?"

"Yes, always. I would love what was good and blame what was bad in any book, any thing, or any person."

"Then, if the good preponderates over the bad in either the thing or the person, I think you are cruelly strict; because no one is perfect."

"But that is no reason why faults are not to be corrected."

"It is a reason why some faults should be tolerated. Give me a friend that would love me wholly, undividedly, faults and all."

"Such a person would not be a friend, because a real friend would tell you of your faults."

"'A friendly eye would never see such faults.'"

"'A flatterer's would not, though they were as high as huge Olympus,' but as far as regards a plain spoken, right minded friend,—I think he would try to conceal them from other eyes, but endeavour to make them as clear as daylight to yourself."

"An office, Mr. Russell, which plenty of friends are always mighty willing to undertake,—friends, in whom it would sometimes be difficult to find any other mark of friendship. Oh! I hate, I abjure your 'friendly freedoms!' Depend upon it, they cause half the misunderstandings and coolnesses that arise among relations and neighbours. A man who reprimands another, stands for the moment on higher ground; he has the power of saying 'I am better than thou,' to some one who in every point but one, is very likely his superior. I have heard that it is, or was, the practice in the Lancasterian schools, when a little boy came up

with his class without having performed his morning ablutions, to pick out a clean little girl who was instructed to approach the dirty little boy and give him a slap on the face. It always appeared to me a likely plan to make the clean little girl malicious and conceited."

Huntley had the laugh on his side; and the narrowness of the path obliging the walkers to separate into couples, he led the way with Hannah, remarking to her, sotto voce,

"Mr. Russell reminds me of Cornwall's reproof of Kent in King Lear—

> 'This is a man
> Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
> A surly roughness; and constrains the garb
> Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he!
> An' they will take it, so; if not,—he's plain.'

But perhaps I am wrong in demanding undivided friendship from man; it is only woman who can love through clouds and sunshine, and see no imperfections in those to whom she is attached."

Mr. Russell was meanwhile observing to Rosina, "Would any one think, now, to hear Mr. Huntley claiming indiscriminate partiality, that

he could ever laugh at a distant friend, or turn a relation into ridicule?"

"He certainly indulges in satire, sometimes," said Rosina.

"Oh yes, we often find that those who most dislike pain themselves, have least objection to inflict it on others."

Here Mr. Russell fell into a reverie; and as he walked very slowly, Rosina asked him if he were tired of carrying the books.

"Not in the least," replied he, rousing up, "I had entirely forgotten them. What is a weight in the pockets to a weight on the mind?—If the novel is no heavier to read than it is to carry, you may think yourself very well off."

"I hope you do not think me very foolish for liking novels."

"Foolish! I think a good novel is a very rational recreation. Oh no, it is some time since I have thought you foolish."

"You own that you did, once, Mr. Russell."

"Why, once,—I did, indeed, have some misgivings how you might turn out; but time has convinced me that a lady may be indulged in a

little frivolity at sixteen, without being utterly hopeless at sixty. No, Rosina, no one could love and live with your mother and sister, and yet be foolish."

"I am glad to hear you say so; for sometimes, when I think how completely different I am from Hannah, I almost despair of being any thing better than a grown up child if I live to the age of Methusaleh."

"And how often are you troubled with these serious reflections?"

"Oh, oftener than you would suppose. Mr. Good vexed me amazingly one day, when mamma had been telling him that *one* of her daughters had said so and so, by replying 'Oh, you need not tell me which of your daughters, no one could mistake a speech of Rosina's for Hannah's, or vice versa.' Now, as the remark in question was rather a flippant one, you cannot think how ashamed I felt! It was horrible to consider that no one ever gave me credit for speaking common sense! Ever since, I have been trying, at spare times, to construct my ideas and expressions as much on Hannah's model as possible."

"No, no, Rosina, that will never answer. As well

might L' Allegro dress up in the cypress weeds of Il Penseroso. Do not spoil your originality by endeavouring to acquire what will only sit awkwardly on you, after all."

"You frighten me, Mr. Russell! Originality? Am I an original?"

"Indeed you are," replied he, laughing.

"Oh, now I see that you and Mr. Good are in a conspiracy against me. But seriously, how am I to set about improving, if I am not to copy Hannah?"

"A serious question demands a serious answer. It is my humble opinion that, without copying Hannah, you might adopt some of those means which have made her what she is. Read more, think more—I must not say consult the looking-glass rather less."

"You *may* say so," said Rosina, colouring, "because I really do desire to improve."

"And I really believe you!" replied Mr. Russell, with uncommon animation, "and have even confidence enough in your good sense to say, that there would be less danger in your looking-glass if it reflected a less pretty face. There is a speech now, which would turn many a young lady's

brain! And yet I am hardy enough to make it to a little coquette."

"You do not think me a coquette, I hope."

"I used a diminutive—a *little* coquette; and the less, I must confess, the better."

Again Mr. Russell seemed oppressed, by the weight on his mind or in his pockets.

"Did your mother say any thing to you, Rosina," asked he, abruptly, "about what passed between us yesterday?"

"Not a word! I was not aware she had even seen you!"

"Indeed!"

"Oh, now you remind me of it, I remember she did mention in a casual way, that you had called upon her. I thought something appeared to have made her low-spirited; but after her telling me that she was quite well, I did not think I had a right to make any further inquiry."

"True, very true. I rather repented, afterwards, that I had seen her. Low-spirited was she?"

"Oh, not enough so to make you uneasy. She was very cheerful in the afternoon."

"Cheerful!"

After a moment's silence, Mr. Russell repeated "Yes, I am sorry for what passed between us. It would have been better if I had not spoken at all on the subject, or else, if I had spoken to Hannah or to you—but there are times when strong feeling makes us act unwisely."

"Dear," cried Rosina, heedlessly, "does strong feeling ever make *you* act unwisely?"

"Why not?" said Mr. Russell, stopping short, and colouring to his temples.

It instantly occurred to Rosina, that there could no longer be a question as to Mr. Russell's being in love. Not knowing what might come next, nor what might have been the nature of his interview with her mother, she began to feel excessively uncomfortable, and to wish they could come up with Hannah and Huntley. All Mr. Russell's addresses, his attention to her at Lady Worral's, her mother's red eyes, and significant hints, came to remembrance, and seemed to her, to have but one interpretation. Her mother had been proud of the compliment implied by Mr. Russell's proposals, and yet unwilling to sacrifice her to a man twice her age, and for whom she had no warmer sentiment than respect. It must be so,

it could not be otherwise! Poor Rosina, flattered, yet woefully disconcerted, stole her hand from her companion's arm, and began to open her parasol; while he, little guessing what was passing in her thoughts, though not without his own embarrassments, said—

"Does it really appear so very ridiculous to you that I should be susceptible of strong feeling?"

"Ridiculous—dear me! no,—I did not know I had used such a word. By the by, where is Dash? He was in sight just now—I think he must have run into that turnip field."

"Pray, Rosina, what is your real opinion of Mr. Huntley?"

"In what respect?" said she, much surprised at the question. "His genius, or his manners, or what?"

"No, no—his temper, for instance?"

"I have never seen it tried."

"That is likely enough—and even if you had, genius and manner, with ladies, cover a multitude of sins."

"Of foibles, I allow, but surely not sins."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Russell, with a little asperity, "there are few sins which we cannot soften into foibles." And changing the subject with a gentler voice, he began to speak—of Swedish turnips!

CHAPTER XIII.

FRIENDLY INTENTIONS.

Sometimes, when we are inclined towards a certain line of conduct which we are not quite sure is right or prudent, circumstances seem to lead us to it whether we will or no.

A visit had long been owing to the Hollands. Mrs. Wellford, who was not very strong, did not feel quite equal to a hot walk across the fields, and Rosina had lately taken a dislike to the society of Miss Phœbe, on account of her repeated allusions to Mr. Huntley and souvenirs of Lewis Pennington, though her alleged reason was Phœbe's excessive stupidity. As it is not quite fair to be rude to all who are stupid, Hannah, to whose share disagreeable visits, &c. usually fell, resolved one cool morning, to please all parties by walking over to the Grange. Rosina was sure she would

be tired to death, but made only a faint offer to accompany her, which Hannah was too good-natured to accept.

Virtue is sometimes its own reward. Hannah did not, indeed, meet Mr. Huntley by the way; but in the Grange parlour she found Mr. Russell, who gave the conversation a more respectable turn than she had expected; or at any rate, his good natured share of such small talk as the Miss Hollands were capable of sustaining, was uttered in a voice, to which from having long associated it with sensible remarks, Hannah had learnt to attribute something sensible in itself. She lengthened her visit more than she had intended, and on her rising to wish good morning, Mr. Russell took up his hat at the same time, and they quitted the Grange together.

"I was rather surprised to see you come in unaccompanied this morning," said he, trying to smile. "You do not often walk alone now."

"I could not persuade Rosina to take so long a walk," said Hannah, colouring. "You know she is not particularly fond of calling at the Grange."

"Why, there are wiser and wittier persons in

the world than the Miss Hollands, it must be confessed; but for my own part, remembering that we shall find imperfection look which way we will, and that their folly is at all events tolerably harmless, I prefer old friends to new ones. But I cannot expect Rosina or even you to do the same."

"I hope we are not in the habit of slighting old friends," said Hannah, hastily. "Surely, Mr. Russell, you do not think,—you cannot imagine—surely, nothing has made you fancy that we have slighted *you?*"

"Nothing of the kind."

"I am glad to hear it. But are you quite sincere?" said she, earnestly. "We have, indeed, once or twice fancied—"

"What?"

"That you *had* been hurt at some imaginary coolness or rudeness. We have so seldom seen you lately!"

"No, indeed! I am the last person to torment myself by any fancies of the sort, and am well assured that neither you nor your mother are capricious or unkind. It would be painful to me

to suppose you were either. If *I* have appeared surly, think that

"Grief and blood ill-tempered vexed me."

I am afraid I can plead no better excuse. I have been too churlish to be able to enjoy the sight of your happiness."

"That does not seem like Mr. Russell," said Hannah, doubtfully. He continued to walk at her side, however, without attempting to enter on his defence. At length she observed—

"This is a delightful autumn! I think I never knew so pleasant a season."

"May you always think so!" exclaimed Mr. Russell, hastily. "May you remember it with equal pleasure, ten, twenty years hence!"

"Thank you," said she, looking down,—"ten, twenty years! how much may happen, how much we may alter in that time! How different our views may be, from what they are now!"

"Different indeed!" said Mr. Russell, with a sigh.

"I thought," pursued Hannah, "that I had cured myself of castle-building long ago; but lately, I have somehow become fond of specu-

lating on futurity; which is certainly very foolish, because, argue on what probabilities we will, we *cannot* tell what trifling accidents may entirely change our destiny and even our wishes."

"Yet I dare not find fault with your *foolishness*, Hannah, since I cannot always help castle-building myself. I am cured of it for the present, however."

"Pray tell me what has been your cure, that I may cure myself."

"I should be sorry to recommend you so unpalatable a medicine. In the first place, I have sunk some inches in my own opinion, and in the second, I have been disappointed in others; so that what with finding one whom I imagined a very clever fellow, nothing more than a dreamy, stupid old bachelor, and with not knowing whether to regret or rejoice in the happiness of one for whom I have a passing good esteem,—my castles have been tumbled down from their airy height by rather an ungentle process."

"And may I venture to ask *whose* happiness you know not whether to rejoice at or regret?"

"One so good and gentle," said Mr. Russell, after a pause, "that I could not bear to give

her unnecessary pain,—nor yet to hazard her peace for want of courage to give a timely warning."

"I think," said Hannah, colouring anxiously, "that you are alluding to me. If I am mistaken, pray forgive my vanity; but if I am right, let me assure you that I would rather run the chance of unnecessary pain, than that of any unknown danger for want of the warning you are fearful of giving."

"Would you? But yet, I know not what right I have—"

"Oh, pray do not question the right! Have you not been my mother's friend, *my* friend, ever since I was old enough to feel the value of one?"

Hannah's lip quivered; and Mr. Russell struggling against an uneasy feeling in his throat, began with,—

"The fact is, Hannah, I have been interested in your improvement and happiness ever since you were a little girl of twelve years old,—that is, ever since I first came to Summerfield. You allowed me, from the beginning, to advise you what books to read, to tell you what idle habits you should avoid, and what active duties you

should practise, and to take you to task for whatever little female weaknesses I should espy; so that, if the habit of interference has now become inveterate, the fault must be in your own docility."

Hannah listened attentively dreading what was to follow.

"That such a girl as you are"—pursued Mr. Russell; "now, Hannah, pray remember that I am a plain spoken vicar, old enough if not wise enough to admonish my young parishioners,—that such a girl as you are, should excite admiration and attachment, is nothing very wonderful, and that you should be susceptible to the flattery of attention and the charm of genius, is equally natural; but—May I go on, or have I already given offence?—I *may* speak? I have but one word to say. Be very cautious before you let your feelings influence you too far, and before you satisfy yourself that Mr. Huntley is worthy of you."

"I am very certain," said Hannah, blushing deeply, "that you would not have spoken in this manner, unless it were your opinion that—that

Mr. Huntley was *not*—worthy of esteem. What are your reasons for thinking so?"

"You shall have them plainly, and then decide for yourself if they have any weight. I can hazard even your anger for the sake of your happiness. In the first place, do you think your destiny would be safe in the hands of one who has little or no religious principle?"

Hannah turned pale. "You do him injustice," said she.

"Are you certain of that?"

"As—as certain as any one can be, judging from casual expressions of feeling, and the general tenor of a person's conversation—"

"Well—the result of my own observation has been different—I hope I may be wrong."

"Religion is implied rather than spoken of, by many people," said Hannah eagerly. "We cannot always tell the depth of feeling which exists beneath a careless surface; nor are those always to be most depended upon who talk the most."

"Certainly not."

"And whether it may be right or wrong, serious

subjects are so commonly excluded from general conversation, that it is only from accident, and from occasional times of emotion and excitement, that we can do more than guess at many persons' hearts. Notwithstanding this, I have heard Mr. Huntley sometimes speak with feeling on the pathos of the scriptures and the beauty of the Sabbath. At any rate, I am secure that he respects, if he does not feel the full excellence of religious ordinances. So that, indeed, Mr. Russell, if your accusation of Mr. Huntley rests solely on opinion, which neither you nor I have had sufficient time fully to form, I must believe him innocent till I have some more serious reason for thinking him guilty."

Hannah spoke with unusual animation, and her kindling colour warned Mr. Russell of the danger of prolonging the discussion. "I will say no more, Hannah," resumed he. "I hope you will forgive me for having presumed to speak at all on so delicate a subject. Nothing but the zeal of an old friend can be my excuse. It was this, indeed, which led me to write to my cousin Frank—"

"To your cousin Frank! About what?"

"About Mr. Huntley. As I had introduced

him to your family, I thought myself bound to make some inquiries concerning his character and connexions."

"Surely, Mr. Russell, if you were in any *doubt*, it would have been as well to make those inquiries *before* introducing him to us! But have you received an answer? May I ask what it contains? Perhaps you will allow me to see it. You must think me very bold," added she with painful agitation.

Mr. Russell drew out the letter, but rapidly glancing over it, was unwilling to give it her. Frank's careless, jocund style would have been a mockery of her feelings. "No, no," said he, wishing and yet not liking her to see it, "I had better not give it you."

"There must be some very dreadful intelligence in it then, I fear," said Hannah, turning so pale that he became alarmed, and placed the letter in her hand. "Read, and judge for yourself," said he. "My duty will then be done, and if you think Mr. Huntley has been unfairly treated"—

Hannah silently opened the letter, but trembled so much that she could hardly read it. A fallen tree lay near the path; she sat down on it, and

recommenced reading the letter with tolerable composure. Her eye ran rapidly over its contents, and her only comment as she skimmed over the introductory page was, in rather a sarcastic tone,—

"Mr. Frank Russell has a free and easy style of writing."

"Of course he did not suppose his letter would be submitted to any eye but mine," said Mr. Russell.

She made no answer, but hastily read on. "He grants him genius, does he?" said she bitterly. "'Incapable of forgiving his mother for being the daughter of a music-master'—Pshaw! All this," said she, eagerly looking up, "about his having been spoilt in childhood by an old aunt, he told me himself!"—Her countenance clouded more and more as she proceeded; and after a moment's pause, she read the letter a second time from beginning to end, as if she would fix every syllable in her memory. Then folding it up, and returning it to Mr. Russell, without so much as a sigh, she said in as calm a voice as he had ever heard,

"Thank you—let us now return home."

"You are not offended with me for believing you could bear to know the truth?" said he anxiously.

She made no answer.

"Whatever the event may be, I have had no *motive*, Hannah, but your happiness."

"I wish," said she, in a very low tone, "you would have the kindness to leave me." Mr. Russell endeavoured to look at her averted face—"You are ill, Hannah?" said he, anxiously.

"Pray leave me," she repeated still more inaudibly, "I shall be better soon;" and unable any longer to restrain the floodgates of emotion, her hands were pressed to her face in anguish, and burning tears fell fast over her slender fingers. Mr. Russell was woefully distressed; he would have endured the question of the Spanish inquisition rather than have caused those tears. He could only entreat her to compose herself, and assure her of his deepest sympathy.

"I believe you do sympathize with me," said Hannah, drying her eyes, "and that you have acted with the kindest intentions. Yet I wish—"

"To be deceived again, Hannah?"

"Yes, for it can make no difference now. To be undeceived is not to—"

"To what? To cease to love? And can Hannah love one who is unworthy?"

"Do not a man's actions speak plainer than the tongues of twenty calumniators?" said she, struggling to command her voice.

"Actions? Ah, Hannah, what actions of Mr. Huntley's can contradict the evidence of this letter?"

She hesitated, and at length answered, "I could mention some, which I believe have never come to your knowledge. And yet, they were trifling, too; but they indicated a noble and generous mind. No one who listens to his conversation can doubt—"

"That he has every virtue under the sun," interrupted Mr. Russell. "Huntley has every charm of manner, but we must consider stubborn facts. He is possessed of so many pleasing, and even brilliant qualities, that it is difficult not to give him credit for every solid virtue; and to see such genius as his applied to unworthy ends, might make an angel weep! Still in the vigour and what

may well be called the pride of youth, I fear that habits inimical to domestic virtue and happiness have been too long fostered, for any rational hope to be entertained that any but some very strong —the strongest of motives—could induce him to eradicate them. He *may* do this; he *will promise* this, it is certain, if you exact such a promise; but how many women have trusted in such promises and have been deceived! How trite are the maxims about reformed rakes—"

"Reformed *what*, Mr. Russell?" said Hannah, indignantly.

"Nay, Hannah," said he, "I did not think of applying so harsh an epithet to Mr. Huntley; but are faults of temper and hardness of belief less difficult to cure than more offensive vices? For Huntley's sake, I wish the experiment could be made,—but for your own, I confess I cannot bear to think of it."

"You are singularly thoughtful for my welfare!" said Hannah, with some displeasure.

"I am, I am, Hannah!" returned he, earnestly.

"You do not seem to consider how the happiness of another person may be affected—"

"Nor is that at all to be considered in the pre-

sent case—the pain of an hour, a week, perhaps a month, is not to be weighed against the self-reproach and misery of years. What are the sufferings, acute as they may be for a time, which a young man endures from disappointed love, compared with the life-consuming wretchedness of an unhappy wife? Do not mistake me, Hannah," continued he, stopping short as they approached the White Cottage, I am not urging you to suddenly dismiss Mr. Huntley—I would only have you beware, and examine narrowly, and weigh cautiously, before you trust too confidingly, in the character and disposition of one who has so much reason to endeavour to appear what he is not, and who may effect his purpose with so much ease. It is your inexperience, your unprotected situation, which makes me thus explicit. Your mother is almost as ready to take others on trust as yourself, and you have no father or guardian who might have saved me this ungrateful office. You forgive me," said he, as they reached the gate. Hannah gave him her hand, but her heart was too full to allow her to reply. She heard gay voices in the parlour, and ran up stairs into her own room, where her spirits could no longer be

artificially sustained. After a fit of crying, such as she had not yielded to for months and years, she bathed her red eyes, smoothed her hair, and did her best to enable herself to join the cheerful party below with a mien as smiling and tranquil as usual.

CHAPTER XIV.

VILLAGE GOSSIPS.

NOTHING occurred this day, the next, or the next, to bring confirmation of the suspicions awakened by Mr. Russell; nor was there any perceptible difference in Hannah's demeanour, except a slight melancholy and occasional abstraction, which excited the raillery of Rosina. Mr. Russell, resolved to let things take their course, absented himself from the White Cottage, nor did chance once throw him in the way of its inmates, during their daily walks.

An opportunity was one morning afforded Hannah of discovering what comments were made by the cottagers on what was passing in the rank above them. Her mother and sister had gone out, and she was sitting at the open window of her bedroom, writing to her youngest brother. She presently heard a countryfied female voice

accost the maid servant, who was probably standing at the kitchen window, with "Sarvant, Mrs. Betty."

"Good day, Mrs. Stokes," returned Betty. This Mrs. Stokes was the honest dame who at present had the honour of boarding and lodging Mr. Huntley.

"I made bold to step up," rejoined Mrs. Stokes, "to see if mistress could give me one of them 'ere warm plaisters that did me so much good last winter. My master's got the rheumatiz terr'ble bad indeed, and it keeps him from his work."

"Oh, then I can tell you, that I know to a certainty she has none of them left. Howsoever, I'll tell her you've called when she comes back, for very likely she has something else that may do instead. She and the young ladies are out just now."

"Oh, are they so? Well, I dare say mistress can tell of something that 'll cure the rheumatiz, for I often says to master, I think she's pretty near as much of a doctor as Mr. Good. She and the young ladies is always very kind; howsomedever, they've never shewn their faces in our

cottage since my best rooms was took by the young gentleman that's going to marry Miss Hannah—"

"*She* going to be married to him?" cried Betty; "who knows that?"

"Sure, it's all settled," said Mrs. Stokes. "Why, I see them walk about together."

"Oh, there's nothing at all in that," cried Betty, very scornfully, "we've had a power of gentlemen here this summer, so that you could hardly turn round for them in our little parlour, and sometimes one has walked out with the young ladies and sometimes another; but for all that, there's nothing in it, and folks are very silly to set reports about, for as I said to Mr. Batt, last night in the shop, it's nothing on earth but flirtation."

Here, Hannah, who had heard quite enough, shut her casement with an intentional slam, but as the day was windy, the hint fell unnoticed on the ears of so thorough-bred a gossip as Mrs. Stokes, who responded

"Oh! is that all? Well, gentlefolks knows their own ways best, but to be sure I thought there was something in it. So Miss Hannah is n't

going to be married then, after all? Well, I don't know but what I'm glad to hear it, too; for our young squire has a temper!"

"No, sure?" said Betty, incredulously.

"Oh, *that's* as true as death—he curses and swears at a fine rate when any thing goes cross with him; and so much as Mr. Russell has said to my master for being rather hasty with his tongue now and then, I thinks to myself sometimes, if he could but hear Mr. Huntley!"

"Well!" rejoined Betty, "I will say for him that he is always mighty soft and sweet when he is here, and very generous too—"

"Oh, he's open-handed enough with his money; I don't deny that. He pays reg'lar, once a week, and gave old Haddon a sovereign for tumbling off a hay-rick; yet for all that, one don't like to be called hard names for not knowing how to please a fine gentleman. Such a fuss as he made one day because I had thrown away a handful of old mignionette that had stood a week upon his chimney-piece! And it's a shame to see how he spends his Sundays—making little pictures of people and houses, and reading story books instead of his bible. Howsoever, that's no matter of

mine; but I'm glad in my heart he's not to have our Miss Hannah."

Mrs. Stokes trudged away, leaving Hannah utterly unable to finish a sentence in the middle of which she had been interrupted.

Huntley, to do him justice, was very cautious of offending the prejudices or awakening the suspicions of his mistress; yet Love, the blindest of deities while lapped in security, is as quick-sighted as Argus when once alarmed. Hannah was now jealously alive to the smallest appearance of want of ease or sincerity in his manner, and tormented herself with conjectures on trifling expressions and actions which would formerly have escaped her notice. She observed that the head-aches of which he occasionally complained, almost always happened to trouble him on Sunday mornings; she remarked that though he spoke openly of many friends and acquaintance with whom he was in the habit of associating when in London, he scarcely ever mentioned his mother or sister, and never except with indifference; and now that he felt secure of her affection, he allowed his satire to fall on the Hollands, the Goods, and even Mr.

Russell, in a way that pained her, while it made Rosina laugh.

Mr. Russell had meanwhile received a second letter from his careless cousin, which gave him more serious concern than the first. It ran as follows:—

"Thy second inquiry, dear Russ, worded with so much caution and sobriety, could not fail to make me laugh; knowing as I did, a little more of the ground than was suspected by thy wisdom. The fact is, Arthur Huntley has a *fidus Achates* ycleped Hallet, in whose painting room I heard, the other day, more of what is going on at Summerfield, than is perhaps even known by its learned vicar. Learn then that our hero has boasted (in confidence) that a pretty little girl has fallen in love with him, but that though somewhat dazzled at first by her piquant manners and hazel eyes, his heart all along has been caught by her sister, whom he verily believes he shall marry, even were it for no better motive than to teaze a certain gloomy rival who advances pretensions to the same lady. Do I startle you, sir? To acknowledge the truth, Huntley has been too cautious to men-

tion names, or Hallet has been too close to acknowledge them, so that I have now told you all I know about the matter; but certainly, if the story is correct, my brother of the pallet must have created a little sensation among you. With regard to the painter's daughter, she did die, but she was not engaged to Mr. Huntley—it was only a flirtation. That, you know, sometimes means a good deal and sometimes very little; but as Grace Medwin never told her love, we have no right to suppose there was any love in the case. Girls die of consumptions every day; and though gossips and neighbours had pronounced it would be a match, we know how such idle reports spread without having any real foundation. Huntley painted Grace's picture; she netted him a purse; and there, very likely, the matter ended. Thank you for your invitation, but my hands are full just at present. A city Mecænas has bespoken two pictures which I must finish without loss of time. Perhaps I may run down to Summerfield at Christmas, though old uncle Nat has a prior claim. But, absent or present, believe, dear Russell, that you possess the entire esteem of your affectionate

"F. R."

It was on the evening of the day on which Mr. Russell received this letter that he met the Wellfords, Hollands, and Greenways, at Mrs. Good's. Irritated at the thought that Rosina's girlish admiration and his own supposed jealousy of Huntley should have been made the theme of painting-room mirth and chit chat, he spoke to him drily, and turned to discuss the affairs of the nation with Mr. Greenway. Huntley did not care for the slight; he was quizzing Phœbe Holland, by affecting to wish to paint her picture, much to the amusement, though a little to the scandal, of Rosina, who was in agony lest she should laugh at the ridiculous characters and attitudes he was proposing, while Hannah, listening or trying to listen to Mrs. Good, was doing her best not to hear what was going on. Her pleading look when she heard him unblushingly declare that he must send to town for a fresh supply of vermilion, instantly cheered him and soon brought him to her side. "Did you think I was going too far?" whispered he with smiling contrition. "There was no danger. Miss Phœbe would have been the last person to detect me."

"But was it quite fair to make her ridiculous in

the eyes of every one who did?" said Hannah timidly.

"Oh, I owe her a grudge, for persuading her father to try to strike a bargain with me for the portraits of his family at the average of five guineas a head! Conceive my horror at being taken for an itinerant Dick Tinto! The old farmer might be excused for knowing no better: it was one of his species who, on my asking leave to enter his premises that I might draw a very picturesque old well, said, 'Oh, aye, you may draw it if you like, but you'll find the handle work mighty hard.' The honest fellow had no other idea of drawing than drawing water! And farmer Holland cannot be expected to be much more enlightened; but a woman, even such a woman as Miss Phœbe, ought to have more tact."

Huntley maintained his seat at Hannah's side till after tea; but the spirit of attraction which sometimes operates on the gentlemen, and leaves the ladies with one side of the room to themselves, divided the company this evening in Mrs. Good's drawing room, while Rosina was playing a duett with Fanny Good. Poor Fanny, with colour mounting to the flaxen curls which hung over

her temples, and eyes not wholly unwet, was doing her best not to disgrace herself in this her first public performance; and Hannah good-naturedly supported her on one side, and turned over the leaves. No great adept, however, in the merits of a school piece, her ears were not sufficiently occupied to prevent her hearing the animation with which Mr. Good was debating the Catholic question with his nephew Sam and Mr. Huntley. Some sarcastic interrogation which she did not catch, made Mr. Good walk off with the air of a man who is indignant at not having a ready answer, but she had heard enough to know that he had taken the *cautious* side, and that Huntley, after displaying a good deal of ingenuity in the use of allowable weapons, had not been able to withhold a sneer at religious prejudices *en masse;* and had asked with the irony of Pilate, "What is truth?" It was a second question, thrusting still more home, succeeding Mr. Good's hasty reply to the first, which had ended the dialogue; and now Huntley and Sam Good, like two kindred souls, were occupying the bow window, triumphing in their victory, and laughing with perfect good fellowship at each others' jests, which

on Sam's part at any rate, were not likely to be very brilliant. An evil conjunction of influences! Sam was one who, not satisfied with his freedom from sense, made pretensions to freedom from prejudice, under which title he classed certain old fashioned ideas which some people esteem virtues. Hannah had always disliked his intimacy with Matthew, and now she was hurt at seeing him on such easy terms with Huntley—Huntley, every way so much his superior! What could they have in common? She could not help sighing; and as she turned her head, she beheld Mr. Russell leaning against the mantel-piece and looking at her with great melancholy. He instantly changed his attitude and employment; but, unfortunately for Hannah's cheerfulness, the look could not be forgotten. Anxious thoughts, despite of herself, would arise, and almost lead to tears, in the midst of social gaiety. Huntley was again at her side; but his presence was not, as usual, sufficient to enliven her.

"What has frozen you to-night?" whispered he, laughingly, as they returned home. "Is the weather so very cold?"

"It *is* rather cold," said Hannah, drawing her shawl round her.

"Cold! *I* call it hot, for October!" cried Sam Good, who was dividing Mrs. Wellford and Rosina. "One would have thought, by the fire my uncle had built up, it was Christmas. Every body was ready to expire except Mr. Russell and you, Miss Wellford. That is one of uncle Sam's ridiculous points—having fires from a certain date, whether it is hot or cold; and certainly he has two or three others; for instance, always introducing every body to every body, which is horridly bad; and drinking healths after dinner, which has gone out nobody knows how long; and calling for a song after supper, which is more antediluvian still; and to wind up all, having his servants in to prayers, which really—"

"Is most antediluvian of all, I suppose," said Rosina indignantly. Huntley laughed; whether at or with Sam, it was impossible to determine.

Hannah's spirits were low when she lay down to sleep. All Mr. Russell's warnings, all his cousin's evidence, all the result of her own observations rose to mind, without her having the power

to combat them. The unction she had laid to her soul, that let Huntley's faults be what they might, she should be the only one to suffer by them, had now no power: she trembled and shuddered for himself; the future presented nothing but ugly phantoms, and her pillow was bathed with silent tears.

Rosina, who was unusually wakeful, could not help feeling a persuasion that her sister, though she lay quite still, was in distress.

"Hannah," said she anxiously, "is any thing the matter?"

"Nothing," returned Hannah, faintly.

"Nothing? But are you sure you are not deceiving me?" and kissing her, she felt that Hannah's cheek was wet.

"You are unhappy, Hannah!" said she, earnestly; for since Rosina had begun to think less of herself, she had taken more interest in others. "Do tell me, my dear girl, what has made you so. Have you and Mr. Huntley had any little quarrel?"

"No,—oh no."

"Well then, what is it? You know you may

trust me. Why should you be afraid of telling me whatever is passing in your mind? You who are always wise and good, can have nothing you need conceal."

"I think," said Hannah huskily, after a pause, and speaking with effort, "it would have been better, perhaps, Rosina, if we had never seen him." Here her self-command gave way, and she wept bitterly.

Rosina, extremely moved, could only wait in silent sympathy, till Hannah was able to answer her with composure; and she then begged to know *why* her sister thought it would have been better never to have seen Mr. Huntley. Hannah, quite won out of reserve by Rosina's tenderness, told her little by little, all that had occurred to make her uneasy, and thereby transferred a great portion of anxiety to the bosom of her sister. Rosina knew not what to think or to advise: she was alternately indignant and terrified at his supposed errors, and anxious to clear him from them by believing them only to have originated in misunderstanding or calumny. After arguing on both suppositions with great eagerness, her fears for

Hannah's happiness made her earnestly beg that she would learn to think of Mr. Huntley with indifference. Hannah sighed; and Rosina, with more seriousness, asked her,

"Do you really think it will be impossible, if events prove that we have been deceived in him?"

"No," said Hannah, "not if my own eyes and ears bore witness to the fact. I have an inexpressible horror of an irreligious man: there could be no sympathy of mind between us; nothing on which to depend, nothing to which to appeal. And if he is so fastidious, how could I hope to preserve his affection after the first warmth of love had gone off—I, who have no accomplishments, no attractions! I could not be starting new ideas and looking differently and amusing him differently every day as you would do—I fear he would grow tired of me!—And if he is subject to bursts of passion, even if I had courage to endure them against myself, I could not support the sight of his unkindness towards his mother and sister; and perhaps, Rosina, towards my own! —It would break my heart. But yet I cannot

identify the Huntley I have learnt to esteem with the Huntley of Mr. Frank Russell's letter; and till conviction is forced on me, I cannot help clinging to my own idea of him, in opposition to that of others."

"Ah, Hannah, but how much superior must have been Mr. Frank Russell's opportunities of judging of Mr. Huntley, to ours, when it is so much to his interest, and so much in his power, to appear to us in his very best colours! And is *our* Mr. Russell ill-natured or given to scandal? Would he ever have interfered if it had not seemed his positive duty? And *has* not the Mr. Huntley of the letter been in some measure identified with the Mr. Huntley whom you love? Why, then, have so many little circumstances given you the uneasiness you describe? Little circumstances, which will be all we shall have to judge by, till perhaps it will be too late—Poor Hannah! I pity you exceedingly. Poor Mr. Huntley, I shall pity him too, if after all, we find we have done him injustice. My dear Hannah, just answer me one question candidly. Are you engaged?"

Hannah's cheek burned with blushes, though

they could not be seen. "No," said she, faulteringly, "our engagement is tacit rather than expressed; but a promise, though only implied, does not give the less pain in being broken."

Here the dialogue ended. Hannah felt that Rosina sympathized with her, though in silence; and in this soothing consciousness, she at length fell asleep.

CHAPTER XV.

GIPSIES.

THE fine weather which had ushered in the autumn seemed now likely to be interrupted by a succession of heavy rains. A few hours of sunshine on the morning after the tea-party at Mrs. Good's, were succeeded by a hopelessly wet afternoon and evening. As Mr. Huntley had failed to make his appearance while the clouds had held up, it was less likely that he would enliven the White Cottage by his presence when the rain was pattering against the casements; and its inmates had therefore resumed their work when the candles were lighted, resigned to the prospect of an uninterrupted evening, when his well-known step was heard.

"How could you be so imprudent as to come out to-night?" said Hannah, looking pleased in spite of herself.

"How could I have the prudence to stay away?" replied he, laughing, as he warmed his hands at the crackling wood fire. "Surely my coming this evening is less wonderful than my staying away this morning. But I can explain that,—I had an adventure!"

"Indeed!" cried Mrs. Wellford. "Pray let us hear it."

"It would hardly do for a novel, though well enough for a rainy evening. You must know that the glimpse of sunshine which we had in the morning, tempted me to walk to that distant corner of Heeley common, which you, madam, one day pointed out to my notice, and wished me to sketch. I had just seated myself on the grass and opened my portfolio, when down came the rain with the fury of a water spout! No umbrella or great coat had I, so with 'the ruling passion strong in' *rain*, I tied up my drawing implements very carefully, and then ran with my best speed towards the nearest shelter. This, however, was not attained till my clothes were completely saturated; and, when reached, proved to be the most squalid, miserable cabin in the world, inhabited by gipsies. I was not disposed just then to be fas-

tidious; shelter was my most pressing want, and that I found. The gang consisted of two men, a wretched looking woman almost buried in an ill contrived bed of great coats and old blankets, several children, and a girl, the perfection of gipsy beauty, engaged in cooking some mess or other, over a few smoking sticks."

"What a charming subject for a sketch!"

"Do you think I allowed it to escape me? No, indeed! The girl offered to tell my fortune, and I offered to draw her picture. She flattered my credulity, and I, her vanity, so that never was there a better bargain. All the fine things she promised me I must not tell; but we became the best friends imaginable, and I was studying her head with professional enthusiasm, when alas! I felt a hand gently insinuating itself into my pocket, and subtracting thence my handkerchief. What a revulsion my romantic feelings underwent! From being ready to join my goodly associates in singing

> "Underneath the greenwood tree,
> Here we live, right merrily,—"

my most anxious thought became how I should

leave them without loss of watch or purse, to say nothing of longing to escape from the close unsavoury atmosphere which the smallness of their cabin made almost intolerable. So, thanking them for their *hospitality*, and rewarding them with some small change, I bid them adieu, though the rain was still falling in torrents."

"You will be lucky if you escape a cold."

"I never had a cold in my life! Oh no, I am none the worse for the rain. But I must shew you my black-eyed gipsy. Here she is. Was not such a study as this worth a Bandana handkerchief?"

Huntley's cheerfulness was so irresistible this evening, that Hannah's doubts and suspicions melted away like mist before the sun-beam. Can this be the young man, thought she, who shuns female society at home, and makes no effort to support domestic gaiety? It struck her that very possibly love might have blinded the eyes of Mr. Frank Russell to the imperfections of the fair Emmeline, and that she might in fact be an insipid common-place girl in whom it was impossible for her talented brother to take interest. Moreover, Mrs. Huntley might be a methodist

and a shrew. Hannah found wonderful comfort in nursing the supposition.

How pleasantly this evening passed! Discourse on gipsy habits and history led to Bamfylde Moore Carew, to Meg Merrilies, to Hayraddin Maugrabin, to the gipsies of Italy and of Tripoli, to the opera of Preciosa. Huntley tried to hum and to strum the gipsy march, and Rosina laughed at his bad fingering, and feared from the huskiness of his voice that he had taken cold in spite of his protestations. Then he snipped a piece of paper into an odd incomprehensible shape, and holding it between the candle and the wall, called Hannah to admire the Rembrandt-like head he had manufactured. Improvements and varieties were suggested, and shadowy spectres innumerable arose from snow-white sheets of Bath hotpressed. Rosina could not deny her goodwill to one who supplied her with amusement and a *little* flattery. A new way of snipping a Carlo Dolce won her heart; a compliment to her pretty fingers quite vanquished her. "Really, Hannah," said she, as they undressed at night, "I can hardly think we have any need or right to judge of Mr. Huntley so very severely."

The next day was hopelessly wet. Huntley did not call till the evening, and he was then so evidently unwell that Mrs. Wellford was angry with him for having come out. He laughed, and challenged Rosina, in bravado, to a duett; but his tones were so inharmoniously husky that he was fain to desist, in compassion to the ears of his audience; and after listening patiently to a dozen recipes for hoarseness which Mrs. Wellford enumerated, and promising to try them all, with a look which Rosina knew how to interpret, he went home early, really feeling too uncomfortable to keep up the farce of freedom from indisposition any longer. Hannah opened the window, and was glad to observe that the rain had ceased, and Mrs. Wellford charged him to keep house the next day, which, however, he could not be prevailed on to promise.

Still, rain, rain, nothing but rain—an awful prospect to those who depend upon exercise and excitement for occupation, though the sober-minded and industrious can regard it with equanimity. Hannah could quietly sit at work, pursuing her own reflections, and glad that Mr. Hunt-

ley had had the prudence to be better than his word, while from the frequency with which Rosina looked up from her drawing, and the impatience with which she viewed the drops chasing each other down the window, it might have been surmised that it was *she* who was thinking of an absent lover. When evening came, without bringing any addition to the party, she could not help exclaiming "How stupid we all are without Mr. Huntley!"

"Speak for yourself, if you please," said her mother. "I am not aware that I am more than usually stupid. With regard to Mr. Huntley, I am very glad he has remained at home."

"So unlike a young man—such a young man as Mr. Huntley, to coddle himself for a cold!"

"Nay, if he had not been so averse from coddling himself, he most likely would have had no cold to complain of."

"So unlike a lover, when the lane is not half a mile long—"

"So *like* a lover, to obey the smallest of his mistress's commands, at whatever discomfort to himself! Did not Hannah beg him not to come

out to-day? If you feel so dull in the absence of Mr. Huntley, what will you do if we should have the misfortune to lose Hannah?"

"Oh, I shall bear the loss with great resignation," said Rosina laughing.

CHAPTER XVI.

MORE KINDNESS THAN PUNCTILIO.

"WHAT can dame Stokes want, this morning?" said Hannah, looking up from her work, as she heard the approaching click of pattens.

"Something for master's terr'ble bad rheumatiz, I dare say," said Rosina.

"What brings you out in such bad weather, Mrs. Stokes?" said Mrs. Wellford, as the dame stood curtseying at the parlour door.

"I'm afraid, ma'am, I shall spoil the carpet if I come in, my cloak drips so, but I says to master I'll just step up, for I know how clever you always was at doctoring—"

"What, is your husband worse, this morning?"

"No, ma'am, thank goodness, it's *young* master this time."

"Mr. Huntley! Is his cold very bad then?"

"Surely, I would not have come to trouble you

about a cold," said Mrs. Stokes disdainfully, "which I could cure myself as well as anybody with gin and honey; but I don't like meddling with dangerous things, and I'm afraid the young gentleman's rather beyond me now, seeing his fever's so high, and his tongue never lays—"

"Dear me!" cried Rosina, dropping her work, and looking at Hannah.

"Fever!" repeated Mrs. Wellford—"Has he sent for Mr. Good?"

"No, ma'am, and that's what I came to ask you about, not liking to take the hazard on myself, for it was all very well yesterday, when he was able to give his own directions; and I asked him if he would have the doctor, and he kept still saying no, and would n't do any thing but lie in bed and drink quarts and quarts of cold water, which I thought very bad for him, and once downright refused to fill the jug, but he fell into one of his passions and said cold water had cured a Mr. Bell Vue Cellini; so all I could do was to let a wilful man have his way, thinking he knew his own constitution best, though I said to my master, I wished we were well rid of him. Only, as he's now so much worse, and quite out of his mind

like, I thought I had better come to you to ask whether or no to fetch Mr. Good, not liking to be the 'sponsible person myself."

"What!" said Mrs. Wellford hastily, "do you mean that he is delirious?"

"Perhaps that may be the word, ma'am—what we call light-headed."

"What can be done for this poor young man?" said Mrs. Wellford, turning to her daughters in much perturbation. "No doubt he caught a fever in that horrible gipsy cabin; and even the violent exercise he took before and after sitting in his wet clothes so long, would be sufficient to account for it. Something must be done. Do not be alarmed, Hannah. Betty shall fetch Mr. Good, and I will return with Mrs. Stokes to see him myself.

"Are you not afraid of the rain?" said Hannah faulteringly.

"Not at all, this is not a time for such foolish fears." And in a few minutes, the goodnatured woman set out on her mission of charity.

"There goes Mr. Good!" exclaimed Rosina, after having kept watch at the window for a quarter of an hour. "I should amazingly like to

beckon to him as he comes back, and ask him how Mr. Huntley is."

She remained at her post of observation for some time, without seeing any one pass except Tom Stokes with a pitchfork over his shoulder. At length Mr. Good was descried, retracing his way through mud and mire, "broadcloth without and a warm heart within"; and, no longer debating whether he would think it odd, Rosina leant out of the casement and began as far as she well could from the subject of her curiosity, by crying

"Good morning, Sir! Is Mrs. Good very well? You find the lane rather dirty, I am afraid. Pray, is mamma coming back soon?"

"No," returned he, "I have made her promise to stay with that imprudent young fellow yonder, till we can get somebody to supply her place for love or money. She has agreed to sit up with him to-night, as dame Stokes is not fit to be trusted—"

"Sit up with him?" repeated Hannah faintly, "is he then so very ill?"

"I am afraid you think Mr. Huntley in danger," said Rosina.

"Delirious at present, but don't frighten yourselves. It is not infectious. I wish I had your brother with me just now, for my hands are very full;—there is a great deal of sickness about and Mr. Bacon does not get on at all;—quite in my way. Good by."

Rosina shook the raindrops from her curls as she drew back her head, and looked sorrowfully at her sister. The afternoon was passed in painful suspense. All Huntley's errors were forgotten in the interest now excited by his illness; and Rosina alternately tormented herself by foreboding the worst, and endeavoured to cheer Hannah by prognosticating the best. Hannah did not feel inclined to talk off her uneasiness. The calamity settled on her mind like a dead weight, and her own misgivings were combated by her own reasonings.

Towards dusk, Mrs. Wellford returned, her thick cloak completely drenched. "You need not take it away," said she as Hannah removed it from her shoulders. "I have only come for a few things that are wanted, and shall return immediately. Dame Stokes is the very worst nurse I ever

saw in a sick room—I always thought her a dawdle. Mr. Russell is sitting with him now, and writing by his bedside to Mrs. Huntley."

"He is in great danger, then," said Hannah.

"He *is* in danger, my love, but I trust it is not imminent. However, if any thing were to happen, we should never forgive ourselves for having delayed sending to his family."

Tears started into Hannah's eyes, and she left the room.

"Poor girl!" said her mother sighing, "I dread to think what a blow may be preparing for her. Mr. Huntley speaks of her incessantly. I shall sit up with Mrs. Stokes to-night, for Mr. Good says the fever has not yet reached its crisis, and I cannot abandon one who has begun to look on me as his mother. It is no small trial to me, Rosina, for I cannot help being reminded of your dear father."

Having now collected the few articles of which she was in want, Mrs. Wellford returned to Farmer Stokes's.

The evening was melancholy enough to both sisters. Uncertain whether their mother might not send for any fresh necessaries or comforts for

her patient, they sat over the parlour fire till midnight.

At length, when the clock had struck twelve, even Hannah allowed that sitting up was useless, though she had no expectation of sleep. It was the first night Mrs. Wellford had passed out of her own house since her widowhood; and it is difficult to describe the void occasioned by the absence of her whose presence had somehow seemed to ward off "all dangers and all spirits of the night," and to ensure peace, rest, and security. Even Betty had a nameless feeling which made her look after the fires and fastenings more carefully than usual. Hannah lay awake for many hours, and when at length her heavy eyes closed, she was roused from miserable dreams by Rosina, who told her she had been crying in her sleep.

On coming down to breakfast the following morning, they found that Betty had already, of her own accord, made a visit of inquiry at Mrs. Stokes's cottage. She brought back word that Mr. Huntley had passed a very bad night, but that now he was a shade better, and that mistress was coming back at dinner time, as Mr. Russell had promised to take her place.

The dinner hour was anxiously expected. At length, it brought Mrs. Wellford, who looked fatigued and out of spirits.

"He had a miserable night," said she in answer to Rosina's eager question, while Hannah *looked* the same inquiry. "A miserable night it truly was to both of us! Mr. Good hopes the worst is over; but he is still in a very precarious state."

"Is he still delirious?" asked Hannah.

"He no longer raves, but he lies in a sort of stupor, and has only occasional gleams of consciousness. In one of these, he recognized me, and murmured 'Mrs. Wellford?—how kind!—how kind!—do not leave me.' I could not resist such an appeal."

"No, indeed! And yet, mamma, you must not, in your exceeding kindness, forget yourself. I fear the fatigue of nursing is too much for you."

"No, I hardly feel the fatigue. It is my *mind* which feels pain."

"No wonder," said Hannah sighing, as she attempted to play with her dinner rather than to taste it.

"I cannot get that unhappy young man out of

my thoughts," exclaimed her mother, leaning her head on her hand to conceal her tears.

"My dear mother," said Hannah anxiously, "I fear, out of kindness to me, you conceal from us the extent of his danger."

"No—no," replied she, wiping her eyes; "his ravings were so dreadful."

Hannah seemed petrified; and as Rosina found she was the only one who had the power of using her knife and fork, she made a sign to Betty to clear the table.

"Shall you go out again this afternoon, mamma?" said Rosina, after watching the breaking clouds for some time.

"Yes, my dear, I think I shall, by and by, though I had rather not—Mr. Russell hoped I should. It is quite amusing to find what a reputation a little experience and common sense have given me."

"You will not, at any rate, sit up a second night?"

"No—Mr. Russell and his maid will divide the watch between them. Mary White is very quiet and handy."

"I suppose," said Hannah hesitatingly, "I must not ask what the subjects of Mr. Huntley's ravings were."

"No, my dear, you had better not. Few of us, even the most innocent, could bear the naked exposure of our minds. Much of his language was incoherent. And sometimes he spoke of persons of whom neither of us know any thing. Will you give me my knitting, Rosina?"

Hannah mechanically pursued her work, and after a dreary silence, arose and quitted the room. When she returned, it was with red eyes, but a calmer countenance. Mrs. Wellford again went out towards evening, and remained at the cottage till about nine o'clock. She brought back the grateful intelligence that Mr. Huntley had been evidently better the whole afternoon, though his fever seemed increasing when she left him. Mr. Russell was very attentive, and Mary as prompt and quiet as could be desired. To dissipate the fatigue of her last night's vigil, Mrs. Wellford went to bed early; and the girls followed her example.

"Rosina—are you asleep?" said Hannah softly, after reflecting some little time in silence.

"No, wide awake," said Rosina, arousing herself, "what do you want?"

"Did mamma say any thing to you while I was out of the room, about what passed last night?"

"Why?—yes, she did. Why do you ask?"

"I wish you would repeat to me every thing that passed."

"Oh Hannah,—I fear I must not."

"Yes, Rosina, you may do so with safety. It could be nothing improper, or mamma would not have told it to you. Her only fear must have been that of hurting my feelings; and I assure you, I am able to bear it, whatever it may be. Fancy is apt to conjure up things much more horrible than reality, and nothing is harder to endure than doubt. Besides, Rosina, only consider how very necessary it is that I should know what Mr. Huntley actually is, before it be too late. To withhold from me any thing that throws light on his character, is not only weak but dangerous."

"I have considered all that, already," said Rosina, sighing, "and yet I cannot bear to give you pain."

"Do not prepare a worse kind of pain for me then, by denying that which may be supported."

Rosina again sighed, and after some uneasy self-debate, said, "Mamma told me that she feared Mr. Huntley's mind was ill regulated. That sometimes his language was like the most beautiful poetry, and at other times, very painful to hear; not like the thoughts one would wish to have on a death-bed."

"I feared so," said Hannah, shuddering.

"That, frequently, he spoke of you,—and sometimes, Hannah,—of me—and of some one called Grace, whom he seemed to confuse with his ideas of you. Mamma cried, when she alluded to this, and said she feared she had not been a prudent mother, and that Mr. Huntley might make you very unhappy. But, my dear Hannah, people in delirium cannot be accountable for what they say, any more than maniacs for the mischief they do in their paroxysms of insanity."

"No," said Hannah, "but if wicked thoughts had not been cherished in health, they could not be uttered in delirium. A bramble brings not forth grapes, nor a fig-tree thistles. The picture is not altered; it is only that the veil is drawn away from it."

"And yet there is no knowing how thoughts

that we should have driven from us when we possessed the power, may combine and arrange themselves in a fever."

"It is very dreadful any way, Rosina. How painful for a person of delicacy to reflect, that in a state of mental aberration, the unconscious exposure of their minds may excite the grief and disgust of their dearest friends!"

She said no more; and Rosina, in spite of her commiseration, fell asleep. Hannah could not close her eyes—

"I suoi pensieri in lei dormir non ponno."

CHAPTER XVII.

FRATERNAL AFFECTION.

THE next day proved tolerably fine. Mrs. Wellford went to the cottage, and on her return to dinner, gave rather a better account of Mr. Huntley. His fever had run high during the night, but he was no longer delirious, though excessively weak. Mr. Russell was summoned to the sick bed of a parishioner, and Mary White had her washing to attend to; therefore Mrs. Wellford returned to officiate as nurse soon after dinner. The girls were relieved of much uneasiness, though it was impossible, as yet, to feel free from anxiety.

Towards evening, a female voice was heard to enquire at the door, "Is this Mr. Huntley's cottage?" Rosina and Hannah instantly dropped their work and ran out to the porch.

"Miss Huntley, I believe," said Rosina quickly,

as her eyes met those of a young lady standing at the threshold: "pray walk in."

"Is my brother here?" asked she, hurriedly.

"This is not his cottage," said Hannah, "but let us prevail on you to take some refreshment after your journey—"

"I fear all is over," said Emmeline, bursting into tears.

"No, he lives! he is recovering!" exclaimed both.

"Thank heaven for it," cried she, endeavouring to restrain her tears. Rosina brought her a glass of water, and Miss Huntley recovering from her emotion, apologized for the mistake she had made, and requested to be directed to her brother's lodgings. They instantly offered to shew her the way, and fetching their bonnets, accompanied her through the lane. Rosina related the origin and history of Mr. Huntley's illness, and Emmeline excused the very natural agitation she had displayed by saying, that she had left her mother in very ill health, which, added to the sudden alarm of her brother's danger, and the haste of her journey, had overcome her spirits. In all that she said, after the first embarrassment of her

mistake, there was so much *rétenue*, good feeling, and propriety, that Hannah and Rosina were prepossessed in her favour. She was evidently in much emotion, which she neither sought to display, nor was able entirely to conceal, and her companions did not think the worse of her for it. Miss Huntley seemed about twenty years of age. She was tall, slight, and of a decidedly elegant carriage. No countenance could be more unlike her brother's; her skin was fair and easily excited to colour, her eyes light blue, her features round, youthful, and pleasing, and her silky ringlets almost as pale as flaxen.

Mrs. Wellford was speaking to dame Stokes at the door of the cottage. A few words acquainted her with the name and mission of Emmeline; and after telling her daughters that since Miss Huntley would supply her place, she should now return home, she led Emmeline into the sick room.

"Did mamma mean that we were to wait for her?" said Rosina.

"I rather think she did," said Hannah.

"Pray come in, young ladies," said Mrs. Stokes, opening the door of Huntley's little parlour, where his easel still stood at the window,

and his books and sketches lay scattered about. They however, preferred lingering near the entrance; and Mrs. Stokes, who was going to the shop, took up her basket and left them to themselves.

Mr. Russell was sitting by Huntley's bed when Emmeline entered. He could hardly help starting at the unexpected apparition of one so young and fair, but immediately concluded who she must be, and arose, making a sign that Huntley was asleep.

"Where is he?" said she softly, unable to perceive him on coming at once into a darkened room. It almost seemed as if the words mingled with her brother's dreams, for a smile overspread his features. Emmeline bent over him, and could hardly forbear uttering an exclamation, when she beheld his changed and pallid countenance. She kissed him gently, and a tear fell on his cheek. So light were his slumbers that the kiss and the tear instantly awoke him, and he looked round with eyes flashing with feverish brilliancy.

"Emmeline," he exclaimed with a start, "what brought you here?"

"Dear Arthur," she replied, affectionately,

" what *should* bring me, but the news of your illness?"

" I did not know you had been sent for," said he, " it was quite unnecessary, for I have been very well attended to."

" That was more than I could know or expect, Arthur, and even if I *had* been aware of it, I could not have been easy, knowing you were dangerously ill at a distance from us. My mother would have come, but she was unable to leave her room, much less to bear the journey."

" I am sorry to hear it," said Huntley, coldly, " it is a pity you did not remain to nurse her, for she is most likely more in need of you than I am."

" Nay, Mr. Huntley," said Mrs. Wellford, in a playful tone, " your sister surely deserves rather a more grateful reception than this, after undertaking so long a journey for your sake."

Huntley did not seem to have been aware of Mrs. Wellford's presence, for he coloured even to his temples. " I am much obliged to her," said he, stretching out his hand to Emmeline with a relenting look, " but it was very silly of her to take so much trouble on my account."

Emmeline's eyes filled with tears, but averting her head from her brother, she encountered the pitying look of Mr. Russell. He immediately turned away; and saying to Mrs. Wellford, that he supposed he should now be rather in the way than otherwise, but that he should be ready to obey the earliest summons, he left the room.

Every word that had passed between the brother and sister had reached Hannah's ears through the thin partition. Recovering from a momentary feeling of sickness, "This is no place for us, Rosina!" said she in a low voice. "We cannot help hearing what is not meant for us: let us go home."

"Without mamma?" said Rosina, feeling the impropriety of remaining, and yet half disposed to linger.

"Yes, yes;—at least—do you wait for her, then, for indeed I *must* return."

She opened the gate as she spoke and walked rapidly away. Rosina remained leaning on the garden palings, and was almost immediately joined by Mr. Russell.

"Rosina here?" exclaimed he with surprise.

"Hannah has but just left me. We were waiting for mamma."

"Had you not better come into the cottage, then? You must find it very damp and cold here."

"No, I had rather not," said Rosina, drawing back; and fancying he looked as if expecting some explanation, she added, "to tell you the truth, we left the kitchen because we could not help being eaves-droppers."

"Indeed!" cried he quickly. "Did Hannah overhear what passed between Miss Huntley and her brother?"

"Yes—she could not help it."

"A singularly affectionate reception," said Mr. Russell with irony, "of one who had travelled a hundred and twenty miles without rest or escort, to attend him in a fever!"

"I was surprised indeed!"

"I ought not to have been."

"He must be very unfeeling, to speak unkindly to such a sister as she appears, at such a moment."

"You may well say, at such a moment! He

was wakened by her tears falling on his cheek. But, Rosina, I do not think your mother is aware that you are waiting for her. When I left Huntley, she seemed to have no intention of immediately quitting him. Most likely she will remain to assist and direct Miss Huntley, who is, of course, quite ignorant what treatment has been pursued. You had better let me see you home, as there is a mist rising, and you will infallibly catch cold if you remain here."

Rosina thought there was nothing better to be done. "When I see a man," said Mr. Russell as they walked up the lane, "despise the natural friends whom Providence has given him, I feel just as I should, if I were to see a careless fellow throwing into the river a handful of gold, which might be the means of securing his prosperity and comfort. In one case, I think, how much food, how much clothing, how many little luxuries for himself and others might that money have procured! In the other, how many solaces in affliction, how many pleasant interchanges of sympathy, how many refuges from dullness, and incitements to virtue have been lost! We may depend

upon it that those whom God has placed together, to eat the same salt, and sleep under the same roof, are either those who, if we take pains to find it out, are most congenial to our own dispositions, or whose foibles, tenderly treated, will exercise those very qualities which are most wanting to the perfection of our characters. Nothing has been left to chance, nothing has been rashly considered: no compound has been attempted of materials that will not amalgamate. Do not fancy that because I am now a solitary being, I am unqualified to judge of this. We were five in family, when I discovered the truth, which has been growing upon me ever since. My father's disposition was impatient, my mother's inert, I was silent and sedentary, George was boisterous and headstrong, Fanny was inconsiderate. And yet, Rosina, here were no ingredients which, when combined, failed to make a harmonious whole. Poor Huntley has not yet made a similar discovery. I should think that what Hannah overheard this evening did not tend to raise him in her opinion."

Mr. Russell here parted with his companion at her garden gate. "I almost wish," thought he as he walked home, "that Hannah could have heard

a little of what passed last night. But no !—things will take their course. Instead of complaining that so little is left to our own management, we ought to rejoice that so many events are directed by greater wisdom than ours."

CHAPTER XVIII.

HEROIC RESOLUTION.

"MOTHER," said Hannah, after a long pause, as they sat that evening at their various quiet employments,—"many things have conspired to make me think that Mr. Huntley is not worthy of esteem, and I must therefore endeavour to cease to love him."

The exertion required by this speech quite overset what self-command she had been able to muster, and she burst into tears.

"My dear Hannah,—my dearest Hannah!" repeated her mother, anxiously pressing her hand in both her own, "this resolution is worthy of you, and events have made me believe it necessary; but do not let yourself be overwhelmed by it, my dearest girl, or you will break my heart."

Hannah dried her tears, and Rosina consider-

ed within herself, how incapable *she* should have been of speaking with such openness and courage, or of saying no more when she had once begun.

Miss Huntley sat up with her brother this night. She had not the pain of nursing him in delirium; and the following day, he appeared so much better, that Mr. Good considered there was no longer a necessity for his kind attendants being deprived of their nightly rest. Mrs. Wellford offered to receive Miss Huntley, but she could not be prevailed on to quit her brother; and a bed was therefore made up for her in the parlour, Mrs. Wellford sending linen, bed-furniture, and such little comforts as she knew dame Stokes to be unable to supply. Emmeline was quite indifferent to her own accommodation, but she was more grateful for the kindness thus displayed than many would have been whose selfishness had made it necessary. She was also thankful to Mrs. Wellford for continuing her domiciliary visits, and aiding her with advice, which prevented her from killing her brother with inexperienced kindness. Mr. Russell called frequently, and as Huntley gradually became

better, was enabled to lighten the tedium of his confinement by reading and conversation. "*My* talents are coming into play at last," said he smiling, as he lent Huntley the support of his arm the first day he quitted his bedroom; "I was quite ashamed to find myself of so little use when you were under the management of the ladies, who have a natural turn for making slops, shaking up pillows, and moving noiselessly. Though Mrs. Wellford called dame Stokes the most awkward person she had ever seen in a sick room, I question whether she did not assign me the same preeminence in her secret heart."

As Huntley now became the occupant of his parlour, Emmeline gladly accepted Mrs. Wellford's offered hospitality. She had so unremittingly attended on her brother, that Hannah and Rosina had not seen her since the evening of her arrival, and on her returning with their mother to tea, they were struck with the change which a week's confinement and anxiety had made in her delicate complexion. Emmeline's cheerfulness, however, was much improved by her brother's convalescence, and she sat down to tea with smiles springing from a lightened heart.

"This Summerfield *may* not be the sweetest place in the world," said she, "but the kindness my brother has met with, will always make me think it so."

"I was afraid," said Rosina, "that you would associate it with his illness, and therefore dislike it."

"No! With the exception of the agony of first seeing him, and that first long, lonely, miserable night, I have really not been unhappy. It was so pleasant to watch his amendment, and to write news of it to my mother, and to tell her of the kindness of every one towards us! You cannot think how strange it seems to me, not only to find Arthur but to find myself domesticated here in a circle of strangers! There is so much suspicion and precaution, and so little hospitality, in and near London, that you remind me of our Welsh friends, among whom every one was welcome and taken on trust. Mr. and Mrs. Good have a hearty warmth of manner, which from the first prevented my feeling forlorn and friendless. I was delighted to tell my mother that the very first night of my arrival, I had *three* beds at command, though I wanted none. The

Miss Hollands have been very kind in sending fruit, and Mr. Good met a Lady Worral, I think he called her, at the door to-day, whom he had great difficulty in persuading not to come in."

"Mr. Good knows her of old," said Rosina. "She would have set every thing to rights, or to wrongs, as the case might be, and have brought back Mr. Huntley's fever with the best intentions in the world."

"Indeed? Well, we will, at any rate, give her credit for benevolent feeling. As to your Mr. Russell, I must hardly trust myself to speak of him. It will be Arthur's fault if he fails to benefit by associating with such a friend."

"You are acquainted with his cousin, I think," said Hannah.

"Yes," said Emmeline, slightly colouring, "but there is very little resemblance between them. Mr. Frank Russell is such a rattle!"

"The more entertaining person of the two, I should think," said Rosina: "however, we must allow for the difference between a young and an elderly man."

"Elderly!" repeated Mrs. Wellford, "Mr. Russell is but thirty-five."

"And he looks younger," observed Miss Huntley.

"Well, I thought he had been more: at any rate he has been a grave, thoughtful person ever since I was a child."

"Not grave, surely," said Emmeline, "he seems, to me, very cheerful."

"Cheerful—ah, that is an elderly quality after all. We often hear of old people being cheerful."

"After such a youth as Mr. Russell's," said Mrs. Wellford. "When youth has been sober, old age has a right to be cheerful."

"Sober! oh, what a horrid word!"

"Well then, temperate,—moderate."

"No, no, sober is the best. It just describes what one can fancy Mr. Russell's youth to have been."

"You remind me of what Hannah said one day," said her mother, smiling. "You love to find fault with Mr. Russell, though you will let no one do so but yourself."

"Did Hannah say that? It was quite a bon-mot *for you*, Hannah."

"Though against you, Rosina."

"Again! My dear Hannah, we shall quite overpower Miss Huntley with the brilliancy of our repartees. But I do not think it *is* against me. There is something very magnanimous in my protection of Mr. Russell. Do not you think so, Miss Huntley?"

Emmeline enjoyed this evening exceedingly. She was amused with Rosina's spirits, and attached by the quieter attractions of Hannah. As Huntley daily gained strength, it was no longer necessary for her to confine herself to his room so entirely as she had hitherto done; and her brother added his persuasions to those of her friends, that she would occasionally vary the monotony of her office by walking with the Miss Wellfords. Huntley was known not to be so particularly attached to her society as to feel its temporary loss in the light of a privation; yet Hannah and Rosina were unable to discover the source of their uncongeniality, or rather, of Emmeline's incapacity to please her brother, since she seemed devotedly attached to him. There was nothing vulgar or

inelegant, which they could detect, in her manners or language: she was not accomplished, certainly, but she appeared to be well acquainted with general literature, and to have a keen perception of the beauties of nature; while her expression of her own thoughts often united originality with simplicity. There was a love of truth and honesty too, and a vein of piety running beneath, though never forced to the surface, which won Hannah's esteem; and the more she was attracted by the sister, the more incomprehensible became the brother's coldness. Without appearing to see more than was meant to be seen, it was impossible for Emmeline not to guess that Hannah was the object of her brother's attachment, and that the excessive kindness which Mrs. Wellford had lavished on him during his illness arose from a stronger motive than mere compassion or hospitality. Impressed with the belief that they would soon be relatives, Emmeline put no restraint on her impulses towards confidence and friendship; she was eager to please; she was resolved to be pleased; and in her generous love for Arthur, lost no opportunity of speaking in his praise. Unfortunately for Emmeline's success, Hannah penetrated her de-

sign, and was on her guard. It was painful to her to see how Miss Huntley was learning to depend on her friendship, knowing that it must so soon be broken off; but she also knew that this would not be the worst she should have to bear.

CHAPTER XIX.

RECOVERY.

Huntley at length succeeded to the privileges of a convalescent, and with the assistance of Mr. Russell's or Emmeline's arm, was able to extend his short walk from the narrow garden into the lane. The first time he achieved this, he was resolved, maugre the prudential advice of his companions, to walk as far as the White Cottage. Hard-hearted must the woman be who can remember that she has been sinned against, when the sinner is just risen from the bed of sickness; and trebly hard-hearted to have the least recollection of faults and foibles, that have in no way had connexion with herself, in the person of an invalid lover. Mr. Russell was kind enough to linger at the door, debating with Mrs. Wellford, on the quantity of wine her grapes might be expected to produce, while Hannah had time to perform one

or two of those little offices which are more commonly rendered by the male sex to the feminine, of placing a chair and sofa cushion for her lover, bringing him a glass of water, &c.; all which it was pleasanter to execute without witnesses than with them, as well as to exchange the simple phrases of "How do you feel to day?—are you gaining strength?"—"A great deal has passed since we last met!—am I much altered?" &c. &c. Rosina's condolences and gratulations were sincere and unconstrained.

"You are bestowing your compassion very unnecessarily, Rosina," said Mr. Russell, entering the parlour, "for Huntley acknowledges, in confidence, that he would not have—what shall I say?—have *unhad* this fever for the world."

"What a pretty confidant you are, Mr. Russell!"

"And he does not even betray confidence correctly," said Huntley. "I only said I would not give up the pleasures of convalescence for the world."

"Which you could not have had, without the fever."

"True, but I might have had the fever without attaining the convalescence."

"In fact, Hannah, he likes to be an object of general attention,—to have Mrs. This sitting up with him, and Miss That calling to inquire, Lady Worral making jellies for him, Miss Holland sending fruit, and all the female population of Summerfield deprived of their natural rest by sympathy and anxiety. All this, you know, is selfishness, pure selfishness. Mrs. Wellford does all she can to foster the vice."

"Here is something which I think will do Mr. Huntley good, after his walk," said Mrs. Wellford, coming in.

"As I said!" observed Mr. Russell.

"How can I thank you as I ought, Mrs. Wellford?" said Huntley; "you are more than mother kind."

"More than mother kind?" repeated Emmeline, rather hurt; "surely that is a foolish phrase, Arthur? No one can be more than mother kind."

"Literally true, Emmeline," returned he. "Mrs. Wellford *has* been more than mother kind to me —kinder than *one* mother, at any rate."

"Let me have no flattery at the expense of my sex," interrupted Mrs. Wellford, cheerfully. "Miss Huntley is quite correct in saying that no one can be more than mother kind; but you poets are apt to indulge in hyperboles and figures of speech."

"I, a poet, madam? I can assure you I never wrote a stanza in my life."

Rosina and Hannah both started at the composure of this affirmation, and thought of the violets.

"I can read poetry, admire poetry, and think poetry," added he, "but for the life of me, I never could *write* poetry."

"I am surprised at that," said Mr. Russell; "I should have thought from your occasional profusion of imagery, that you had been one of those who 'lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.'"

"No, indeed. Degrading as may be the confession, I never could find the rhymes."

"What! can Miss Huntley tell no tales?" said Rosina, observing that Emmeline smiled.

"I *must* not," said she, "or else I might remind Arthur—

"Of some ode to a humming-top, or school ex-

ercise, I suppose," interrupted Huntley. "Pray don't rake up any such old rubbish. Believe me, ladies, that I am one of the muse's most scorned subjects. I never *was* a poet. The pallet has prevented me from meddling with the lyre. For pity's sake," added he, in a lower voice to Rosina, when he saw that Mr. Russell was engaged by some one else, "lend me, or lend Emmeline for my use, if you will, some books that I can *read;* for Mr. Russell, with the best intentions in the world, has been boring me for this week past, with 'Consolations in Sickness,' and 'Thoughts on Death, or the Invalid's Companion,' the very dullest companion, I can give you my word for it, that an invalid could have."

Huntley was too weak to be able to take any further share in the conversation; and Emmeline observing his exhausted look, proposed that they should return. Hannah lingered at the door to watch him as he slowly walked down the lane, and thought that this anxiously looked for meeting had been productive of as much pain as pleasure.

In the evening, when Miss Huntley returned

to the White Cottage, she casually mentioned that she was going to leave Summerfield on the following Monday.

"I had no idea that we should lose you so soon," said Mrs. Wellford, "we all hoped that you would remain with us till your brother's health was completely re-established."

"Oh, he is in a fair way of recovery," she replied, with a forced smile, "and I leave him with excellent nurses. My mother is in ill health, and I ought not to be absent from her longer than I can help."

"You have not received any worse account of her, I hope?"

"No—but she would abstain, on principle, from summoning me from Arthur while she could possibly do without me. She thinks of every one before herself; and that is a good reason, you know, why I should think of *her*."

"Undoubtedly; but, my dear Miss Huntley, I trust you are not hurrying away from us merely because you do not feel yourself a regularly invited guest? May not the acquaintance which began by accident, be continued from choice? On our parts, I can assure you, there is every desire

to improve it, and I hope you are not so ceremonious as to leave us unless your presence is really needed at home."

Emmeline's eyes suddenly filled with tears, which were a mystery to Hannah, as the occasion seemed scarcely to demand them. "I feel your kindness exactly as you mean me to feel it," said she hurriedly, "such as I should be delighted to avail myself of, and not as a painful obligation; but—my presence, in fact, is *always* wanted at home. My mother suffers so much from ill health, low spirits, and vexation of one kind or another, that I am almost indispensible to her. Arthur can spare me very well now."

Hannah feared that Miss Huntley was, in reality, being *sent* home, sooner than her own inclinations prompted. She had no other way of accounting for her want of spirits during the evening; and the idea did not tend to enliven her own. Rosina's soul was intent on a little drawing of Summerfield, which she was finishing for Emmeline. She was very prone to form sudden and strong likings and dislikings; and a week's intimacy had convinced her that Miss Huntley was one of the sweetest girls in the world. As their

characters and habits were very different, it is possible that time might have persuaded her that this sweet girl was rather insipid, had narrow ideas, or wanted general knowledge, all which were defects Rosina was much in the habit of attributing to her acquaintance; but at present, Emmeline's style of dressing her hair was just the thing, her temper was beyond praise, her hand and handwriting the prettiest in the world, her heart excellent; she was, in short, a creature whom it was impossible not to love!

The next day being Sunday, Huntley would not allow Emmeline to be kept from church on his account, and she therefore accompanied the Wellfords. While he sat at his cottage window, alternately reading 'Noctes Ambrosianæ,' and analyzing autumnal tints, two innocent and grateful hearts were returning thanks for his recovery. In the evening he accompanied his sister to Mrs. Wellford's, and was more cheerful, even-tempered, and like his usual self, than he had been since his illness. He could even be kind to Emmeline, and laugh at "the enthusiastic temperament of his little sister." Emmeline looked surprised and pleased at the diminutive; and it

would have been well if in the gaiety of her heart, she had not once, in alluding to former times, casually mentioned the name of "Miss Medwin." Like Lord Byron, "he gave her a look," and Hannah then first learnt how Huntley *could* look on certain occasions. But Emmeline had been too much used to stand the fire of his eye to be silenced for more than a few minutes; and if her remarks were more weighed and her gaiety somewhat more chastised than before, it was nevertheless a happy evening. It was prolonged, for Emmeline's sake, rather more than prudence would have dictated for Huntley; and as the brother and sister were to part to-night, they walked home together, and Miss Huntley afterwards returned alone. She begged that as the stage passed through Summerfield very early in the morning, no one would disturb themselves on her account, which, however, they would not promise.

"Eleven o'clock, I declare," said Emmeline with a sigh. "My last evening in Summerfield is at an end."

"Not your last, I hope," said Rosina. "Perhaps you will come again."

"How much we sometimes wish, Mrs. Well-

ford, to know whether an accidental meeting will be a point from which a long and increasing friendship will hereafter be dated, or whether it will stand like a bright little spot in future retrospections, or perhaps be altogether lost sight of! *That*, I am sure, will not be the case with me in the present instance. Still, I should like a little peep into futurity."

"Ah! who would not," exclaimed Rosina.

The next morning, Miss Huntley, on coming softly down stairs, in hopes that Mrs. Wellford, at least, would not be aroused, found Hannah already making breakfast, and her mother cutting sandwiches; while Rosina, without considering whether a nosegay might be in the way in a stage coach, was tying up a bouquet of her latest roses. Emmeline, with more feeling than eloquence, could only reiterate "How much I am obliged to you!—this is excessively kind—I am sure I shall never forget how kind you have been to me." She expressed something like a wish, hope, or entreaty, that Hannah would write to her, which Hannah, very opportunely called out of the room by Betty, had no occasion to hear, and Emmeline had not quite sufficient courage to repeat it.

The moment of parting came too quickly, and when the coach door closed on her, she was glad to find her only companion an old woman, too drowsy and unconcerned to notice that her eyes were shining with tears.

"I certainly like Miss Huntley exceedingly!" said Rosina, drawing a long breath as she re-entered the cottage. "My dear Hannah, you did not hear her say that she wished you would write to her."

"I am glad I did not."

"Glad! you do not like her then as much as I do!"

"Oh, indeed, Rosina, I like her very much," said Hannah, smiling; "but we may love a person, and yet not wish to correspond with him."

"What possible objection could you have to correspond with Miss Huntley?"

"What pleasure can I have in corresponding with any one? I who write such stupid letters?"

Hannah left Rosina, who exclaimed within herself, "Certainly I *do* pity a person who cannot, and who feels she cannot, write a good letter! It is a real misfortune!" And with an irrepressible yawn, the consequence of too early rising, she

began to consider what she should do with the superfluous hour that remained on her hands. Luckily it occurred to her that she could write to Matthew, and tell him *all about* Mr. Huntley and his sister from beginning to end. "It is a real misfortune not to be able to write a good letter!"

CHAPTER XX.

A WALK ON THE DOWNS.

The year was now falling into the sear and yellow leaf, and the woods were assuming those brilliant tints which Washington Irving has beautifully compared to the deceitful hectic on the cheek of consumption. The air possessed that dry, soft warmth which often succeeds a short period of rain, even as the mind, after sinking beneath sorrow and tears, attains a healthy cheerfulness worth more than its former gaiety. It was just the weather to promote the recovery of Huntley, whose gratitude to his friends for their kindness during his illness, was very strongly felt and animatedly expressed. Hannah now possessed more attractions in his eyes than ever. But with an ague chill of disappointment, he perceived that she was no longer the same. It would be difficult to tell what precise tone, look, or expression

awoke him to the painful truth; for Hannah, fearful of grieving him while his health was barely re-established, was prevented by pity from intentionally betraying any alteration of feeling; but pity, though akin to love, may be distinguished from it; and there was an occasional look of alarm, of uneasiness, which set Huntley's fancy to work. He now never saw her alone; it seemed as if there were an icy barrier between them which imparted its benumbing influence to whichever attempted to surmount it. He fretted and chafed at the unknown obstacle, which he knew not how to break through.

One morning, opportunity seemed to favour his wishes. He found Hannah alone, and though she soon invented a pretext for quitting him and going in search of her mother, he detained her. "Will you take a walk with me, this morning?" said he, in his most persuasive manner.

To his surprise and pleasure, Hannah, after a moment's pause, acceded, without any further solicitation. He thought, when she rejoined him, that she looked paler than usual.

"Which way shall we go?" said he.

"To the Downs," said Hannah.

They walked on in silence, for the minds of both were too full for utterance, Hannah, especially, while endeavouring to fortify herself for the explanation she was meditating, felt her courage dying away even before it was needed, and almost wished the silence might never be broken. At length, when they had reached a perfectly still and solitary part of the Downs, Huntley took and gently pressed the hand which rested on his arm; and in a voice modulated to the softest and most penetrating tenderness, said, with a smile which seemed to expect no unflattering answer,

"How long, Hannah, is it since you have ceased to love me?"

Hannah's heart died within her; but after a moment's struggle, she replied "Only since I have learnt to believe you unworthy of my esteem."

"Just Heaven!" exclaimed Huntley, starting with agony, at an answer for which he had been so wholly unprepared. "You are not in earnest, Hannah? You cannot mean to say that I have actually lost your affection?"

"I fear you have not," said Hannah, looking down, "but now is perhaps the best time, Mr. Huntley, for—"

"*Mr.* Huntley?" interrupted he, passionately, "I answer to no such name from *your* lips!—Call me Huntley, Arthur, what you will,—any thing but that chilling word which seems to tell me you could part from me as composedly as if I were the acquaintance of an hour!"

"That I can never do," said Hannah, trembling at his vehemence of look and manner; "but alas! Huntley, it might have been better for us if we had never met."

"Why so? Why would it have been better, Hannah, that the best and most exquisite portion of my life had never been? What was I before I knew you? How worse than wasted now appear all the years that elapsed before that time! And have *you* not known what it was to love? Better for us never to have met? Can you tell me so with that calm look and that unfaultering voice? Good heavens, is it possible that I can have been deceived in you?"

"No, Mr. Huntley, it is *not* possible," said Hannah, sighing.

"Whence then this change?"

"It is for our mutual welfare."

"Not for mine," interrupted he with emotion.

"For mine then," said Hannah, "and would you wish me to leave you in error when my own feelings have changed, or persist in an engagement which would be fatal to my peace of mind?"

"Oh, who has robbed me of your confidence?" exclaimed he with anguish. "Has Emmeline—?"

"Emmeline, Mr. Huntley? She never spoke of you but with the warmest affection."

"I know her *generous* way of eulogizing," said Huntley bitterly. "A thousand to one, her absurd confidences or her injudicious, palpable manœuvring has been the cause of this! I foresaw this!"

"Oh, Mr. Huntley!"—

"Has Russell then been my enemy?" cried he.

"Alas, Mr. Huntley, you have had no enemy but yourself."

"Myself?" he repeated with a bewildered and uneasy air—"Ah, Hannah!" he continued in gentler accents: "If you knew the schemes of happiness with which I had connected you! Give

me something to defend, to confess, or to protest against. How have I offended you?"

"You have *not* offended me. Do I speak or look as if I were offended? If I were, this explanation would not be so painful to me. It is only increased knowledge of your general character which makes me fear—"

He was resolved not to interrupt her, but her voice became inaudible.

"Let me think over all my crimes," said Huntley with forced irony, "and discover which is likely to have been least excusable in a lady's fancy. Inconstancy cannot be one of them at any rate. I never knew what real love was, till I saw you, and can never feel it for any one else. You must be so secure of this, that all the oaths in a lover's calendar could not make it more certain. Confess, Hannah, that you do me this justice at any rate. You believe that I love you—"

"That you love me *now*—"

"Now and for ever!" he reiterated, "I swear it to you by—"

"No, Mr. Huntley, you were right just now, in saying that oaths could not make affection more certain. Even if they could—"

"This then, is not my offence. Tell me, for heaven's sake, what you dislike; tell me what you dread."

"I dread," said she timidly, "your placing only a nominal faith in that heaven on which you so often call."

Huntley was momentarily checked. "It is true," said he, rather out of countenance, "that like the generality of young men, I am not—I have not been—in short, that I do not think so much of these things as you do. But that should never be a subject of dispute between us. We would leave it untouched."

"It is easy," said Hannah, "for you to leave untouched a subject which you feel uninteresting and tiresome; but could *I* be happy in consigning to the same oblivion, the source of all my hope, consolation, and dread? Or could I be at peace, knowing that you had no higher motive or check than mere feeling? My weakness is my strength. Hard as it is to listen to you and yet be true to one's self, yet your very offer of such terms, convinces me that no terms could secure our happiness."

"But your creed should be mine," cried Huntley, eagerly. "Can I promise more than this?"

"No one can promise conviction."

"Love is not conviction, I know, but it may lead to it. Is not it your favourite Mr. Russell's opinion that the will has much to do with belief?"

"And therefore, Huntley, what security could I have for your belief, depending only on your will?"

"Hannah, do you think me beyond the hope of conviction or amendment?"

"That would be terrible indeed," said Hannah shuddering, "but I could not rely on the hasty conviction which you *promise*, obtaining a real influence over principle or temper."

"You think my temper violent. I own that I cannot always controul it; but can you dread, Hannah, that I should ever be such a wretch as to turn its fury against *you?*"

"Yet it would be nearly as painful for me to see it fall on those connected with you by earlier ties than myself."

"You refer to my mother and sister;" said Huntley after a moment's pause. "Well, I will be candid with you, Hannah. For my mother, she has *no* just cause of complaint; and I confess I cannot love Emmeline."

"But what a confession!" exclaimed Hannah. "You acknowledge that you cannot love a sister who endeavours to conciliate you by every means in her power, to whom you owe gratitude as well as affection!"

"Emmeline's mind, manners, ways of thinking in every respect, are diametrically opposed to mine," said he, quickly; "how then can affection exist between us?"

"It *does* exist on one side."

"My taste is unfortunately fastidious, and Emmeline has a total want of refinement."

"I could not perceive it myself. Yet that might possibly proceed from my own deficiency in the same respect;—but how could *I*, then, hope to satisfy you?"

"How immeasurable a difference! Your's is native refinement, and Emmeline's, native vulgarity!"

"Vulgarity!" repeated Hannah.

"Did you ever hear her laugh?" said he.

This question made Hannah shrink from her lover with more dislike, than, a moment before, she could have believed him capable of exciting. There was a repulsive, biting sarcasm in his

manner of uttering it, which caused a complete revulsion in her feelings; and at once convinced her, that there was a total unfitness between Huntley's disposition and her own.

"Enough, Mr. Huntley," said she in an altered tone, "you have convinced me that we can never understand one another."

She dropped her hand from his arm, and turned homewards.

"Hannah! Hannah!" cried he with instant remorse, "vexation has made me almost beside myself. Do not give me up for the hasty expression of a moment!"

"How can I judge of you," inquired Hannah sorrowfully, "except from the hasty expressions of a moment?"

Huntley sighed bitterly, and accompanied her in silence. He had so little questioned a grateful acceptance of his affection, that he was unprepared for the defence of errors which he had been accustomed to consider as venial foibles characteristic of spirit and genius. Nothing could equal his surprise and perturbation on discovering that they had power to place an insuperable barrier between himself and a being whose strength

he had believed solely to consist in a boundless capacity of loving.

Both were too powerfully absorbed in thought to take much notice of what passed around them; or if Huntley looked up now and then at the darkened sky, it was with a feeling of its accordance with his own gloomy mind rather than a presentiment of stormy weather. The brilliancy of the day had, however, been observed during their walk; clouds had gathered, and there was that peculiar heaviness in the atmosphere which now and then precedes a thunder storm late in the season. Suddenly, as Hannah was walking homewards at an accelerated pace, with her eyes fixed on the ground, a flash of lightning seemed almost to tear open the earth beneath her feet, and was immediately followed by a loud clap of thunder. She turned excessively pale, and could scarcely help screaming; for alarm at thunder was almost the only foolish fear to which she was subject, and the present nervous state of her mind made her less able to overcome it.

"Let us run," said Huntley, drawing her arm within his own, "the storm threatens to be violent." And hurrying through the rain, which began to

fall in torrents, they soon gained the shelter formed by a small thicket, scarcely of sufficient height to be dangerous.

"You are trembling," said Huntley, passing his arm around her; "fear nothing! No bolt shall reach you, unless it first strikes me."

"Is this a safe shelter for us?" said Hannah, scarcely able to draw her breath. "The lightning may strike the trees."

"They are not very high, and I think this driving rain presents more real danger; but decide for yourself."

Hannah was on the point of deciding against the shelter, when she remembered the origin of Huntley's illness, and looking anxiously at him, saw how much he was already flushed with the exertion of running a short distance. "We will remain," said she hesitatingly.

Huntley saw the look and guessed the motive. "Hannah!" exclaimed he triumphantly, "you can think of me before yourself in such a moment as this! You love me still!"

"You must not believe it," said Hannah faintly.

Huntley looked at her earnestly, and an expression of grief took place of his glowing smile of

transport. He folded his arms, and walked to the extremity of the limited shelter, gazing recklessly at the war of elements.

"Now mischief, do your work!" muttered he, in a suppressed but distinct tone, every syllable of which reached the ear for which it was intended—"'Spit, fire; spout, rain!' Flash, lightning!—Strike, smite, reduce me to cinders if you will—it is all the same to me."

"Forbear!" exclaimed Hannah, bursting into tears, as a flash seemed about to take him at his word, "it is dreadful,—impious!—"

"Strike me if you will," pursued Huntley with bitter laughter, "'I'll tax not *you*, ye elements, with unkindness.' What! In tears, Hannah! In tears for one whose fate is indifferent to you, one whom you cannot understand? Come?" said he, changing his forced irony for real feeling, "say that we are again all to each other that we were before my illness."

"I must not—I cannot."

"Then farewell," cried Huntley, breaking from her abruptly. He soon paused, and returned. "I cannot leave you here," said he; and leaning against a tree, he averted his face, and watched

the breaking clouds without making any further attempt to soften her. Hannah meanwhile wept, though in silence.

After a very tedious quarter of an hour, the sky cleared. "Shall we return?" said Huntley, drily. Hannah only replied by walking forwards, and was glad that he did not offer his arm. So painful a distance did there now seem between them, that she regretted that the nearer path which they had taken, forced her to be indebted to him for opening a gate, and assisting her over a stile; since these little courtesies, once rendered with affectionate gallantry, were now performed with a scrupulous attention humiliating to the receiver. On the latter occasion, Huntley had the first opportunity of noticing the traces of emotion in Hannah's pale cheeks and heavy eyes.

"I never thought till to-day," said he, as they walked on, "that Miss Wellford was a coquette."

"A coquette!" repeated Hannah in amazement.

"I now begin to read your character and Mr. Russell's aright."

"Oh, Mr. Huntley!" exclaimed she, almost

voicelessly, "how wrongly you judge of both of us!"

He was silent.

"Indeed," resumed Hannah, quite unable to leave such an accusation uncontradicted, "I am certain you *cannot* think thus in your heart—you cannot have known us so long, and think that you only now understand us."

Huntley was again silent from policy, thinking he had touched the right chord, and that this simple-minded girl would be eager to pacify his jealousy. But Hannah was too secure in innocence to have more than a moment's alarm on this score; she felt that Huntley *could* not be jealous; and they reached the garden gate in silence. Then, detaining her for a moment before she entered, Huntley said in a low, husky voice, "Still, Hannah, still obdurate?"

She raised her eyes, brimming with tears, but gave no look of dissent.

"Cold-hearted girl," exclaimed he. "This is what I suppose you will call the sacrifice of feeling to principle—of *my* feelings to *your* principles; but it will not secure even your own happiness,

and your's will be the blame, into whatever excesses disappointment and recklessness may hurry me."

He left her abruptly; and Hannah, scarcely able to support herself, entered the garden. Her mother met her at the door, and inquired with anxiety how she had escaped the storm. But she seemed unable to understand the question. Her lips mechanically moved without uttering any sound: she laid aside her bonnet, sat down, and endeavoured to turn her breath, but was unable. Mrs. Wellford was alarmed by her manner, and sending Rosina for some hartshorn, she took her daughter's hand, and silently waited for an explanation till she should recover herself. The suffocating feeling could not last long; Hannah convulsively clasped her mother's hand, and was instantly in hysterics. The tale was imperfectly told in broken accents,—its conclusion had already been guessed.

CHAPTER XXI.

A MORAL.

HUNTLEY passed some hours in a storm of passion: he then began to think of Hannah more temperately, and to believe that Mr. Russell, for ends of his own, had persuaded her to a sacrifice which her heart would not have dictated. Scarcely did the possibility occur to him, when he settled it into a fact: under this new impression he wrote to Hannah, and left the letter at the cottage himself. During the remainder of the evening he was in hopes of receiving an answer; and when forced to abandon the expectation, his anger reverted to its first object, whom he now accused of coldness of heart. "She never did, she never *could* appreciate such love as mine!" exclaimed he, as he impetuously paced his narrow room. "How prone we are to believe that a lovely face must be the

index of as perfect a mind! That evenness of manner, which I fancied was the restraint feminine modesty held over strong feeling, is nothing after all, but the composure of a selfish disposition. She can neither err, nor have sufficient magnanimity to forgive errors. She never felt anguish! She never loved!"

The next morning, Huntley felt that he could not abandon Hannah without another effort to regain her. He went to the White Cottage,—found Mrs. Wellford and Rosina in the parlour,—and guessed, from their embarrassed manner, that his hopes had little on which to depend. After breaking off two or three hurried sentences,—for how could he speak on indifferent subjects?—he ventured to inquire after Miss Wellford, and to hope that she was not confined to her room.

"Not,—not by illness," said Mrs. Wellford, with hesitation.

"If she would permit me only a single moment —dear Mrs. Wellford, there was some misunderstanding,—in the name of your former kindness to me," said he, taking her hand and almost ready to bend his knee, "be my friend now. Five mi-

nutes, perhaps, might serve for my justification—"

"I fear, not," said Mrs. Wellford, softened by his distress, "however, Rosina, ask your sister—"

Rosina did not require a second bidding.

"And, now, for Heaven's sake," exclaimed he, as soon as she had disappeared, "tell me what are my crimes, and who are my accusers."

"No one has been your accuser, Mr. Huntley. We have merely drawn inferences from what we have casually heard and seen; and the result of those inferences in my daughter's mind, has been, that in spite of your varied talents, you could not make her happy."

"And is your own opinion the same?"

"I must confess that it is."

"And this is the punishment," said he, resting his head on his hands, "of boyish folly."

"You lead me to expect, however, that you can justify yourself—"

"No," said he, bitterly, "if Hannah, judging of me, by what she has seen me, can feel that I am unworthy of her, there could be little chance of her loving me if she knew all!"

Rosina returned with reluctant steps to say, that her sister did not feel well enough to leave her room. Huntley quite lost self command. He criminated himself and then endeavoured to obtain Mrs. Wellford's approval of his candour, and his desire of amendment. She commended it, but said, it was too slight a security for her daughter's happiness. From persuasion to entreaty, from entreaty to reproach, and even threats of suicide, which terrified Rosina into tears, Huntley proceeded, in the vain hope of softening, convincing, or intimidating Mrs. Wellford. At length, bidding both of them farewell, he left the house.

Huntley paused a moment at the gate, and looked towards the vicarage; but the thought of a moment was abandoned with a feeling of haughtiness, and he rapidly walked home. Here he paid his bills, packed up his pictures, and gave directions for their being sent to town. Some hours must elapse before the afternoon coach would pass through Summerfield; he therefore quitted the cottage, in hopes that activity of body might allay the fever of the mind, and hurried towards the downs. On his return through a lane after an

aimless walk to a considerable distance, he met the very man he wished to shun, Mr. Russell.

As Huntley was far from desiring to seek sympathy from any one at this moment, and least of all from Mr. Russell, he attempted to pass him with a common salutation; but the vicar, struck by his lowering countenance, was resolved not to be so easily shaken off.

"Where are you going in such haste?" said he, smiling.

"Home," answered Huntley.

"Home?"

"Literally. I shall be on the road thither in half an hour. You have saved me the trouble of leaving a P. P. C. card."

"Why, this is something sudden! You will return to us again, I suppose?"

"Never," said Huntley, in a tone of such anguish as to fill his good-natured rival with concern. It was impossible at that moment to doubt Mr. Russell's sincerity. Huntley felt it.

"Russell," said he, "I am the most miserable of men!"

"That is a strong expression, my dear Huntley," said Mr. Russell.

"I have been deceived, betrayed!" exclaimed he. "I thought Hannah loved me."

"I thought so too," said the vicar.

"Then we have both been mistaken. But you, Mr. Russell, have a great deal of influence. An hour ago, I would have scorned to have solicited it, but—"

"You give me too much credit. I believe I have less than you have. But, my dear Huntley, be calm—"

"I never was calmer—I have the calm of despair!—And yet, if I could see her once more, there might be a little to hope—"

"Why not write?"

"I have written, but she refuses to see me."

"Then, my dear Huntley, from my knowledge of Hannah's character, I should say that your case is bad. If she has so far conquered her feelings, believe that her principles will carry her through with it. With perfect sincerity I can say that I am sorry for you, for I know—"

"What it is to love Hannah!" interrupted

Huntley. "I believe you, Mr. Russell, on my soul! If I had had fair play—"

"What then?" said Mr. Russell, with a look which checked him at once.

"She would have been mine," said Huntley, moodily.

"She would have been yours if you had had fair play—And you believe that *I* know what it is to—If I *do* know what it is to love Hannah, Mr. Huntley, *who* has had fair play?—I have never mentioned the name of love to Hannah: if there has been any supplanting in the case, who was the supplanter?"

"There *could* be no supplanting," said Huntley, "when no pretensions were supported on your side."

"You either do or do not think me a rival—"

"Not an open one."

"Admitted: I have not been. Was it not enough then to expect from a silent one, who saw another step into the place which he had indulged the hope of occupying, that he should remain inactive, and let things take their course?—In such circumstances, not to hate, surely amounted al-

most to a virtue. But Huntley, I did more. At first, certainly, I thought your admiration of Hannah sprang merely from your enthusiasm as an artist. I was stupid enough to believe that you merely wished to paint her picture. When I detected the truth, the blow was severe; but having at that time no doubt, but that you were qualified infinitely beyond myself, to make her happy, I smothered my own feelings as I could, and had not the remotest idea of entering into competition with you. Subsequent events led me to suppose that you were not so fitted for each other as had at first appeared. More than I had done, I could not do. Less than I then did, I could not do. Essential as you may think Hannah is to your happiness, I do not think that you would secure hers; and feeling for her as you tell me I feel,—can you wonder, Huntley, that I should shun the office of your advocate?"

"I cannot," said Huntley, hastily. "You have been a generous rival—you have been kind to me in health and in sickness—but I cannot do justice to you now. You *say* your interference has not been selfish—doubtless it has been well meaning—though I own I could have dispensed with it—

and I hope you will be happy. You may be more fortunate than I have been, but you cannot love as I have done!"

"Why, Huntley, should not this painful lesson teach you—"

"Excuse me," cried Huntley, colouring, "I am not quite able to bear a lecture now—there is no danger of my forgetting the moral of the lesson."

"You mistake me. I was only going to say that with your mind still sore under this stroke, a very little self-command—"

"Here then we must part," said Huntley, appearing not to hear him, as they reached Mrs. Stokes's gate, "the coach will enter Summerfield in half an hour, and my portmanteau is still unpacked. Farewell!"

Mr. Russell shook hands with him with much feeling.

CHAPTER XXII.

HEART BREAKING.

"He is gone!" said Rosina abruptly, as she entered her sister's room.

"Gone!" repeated Hannah.

"Yes, Mrs. Stokes has just told us so. She brought a parcel for mamma; and what do you think it contained? The picture!"

"I hope I shall never see it, said Hannah, shuddering.

"You shall not; do not be afraid. Mamma has locked it up. What a splendid present, and yet, how impossible to look at it without pain!"

"And he is quite gone!"

Hannah hid her face in her hands. She could not shed tears. Rosina endeavoured to rouse her, but after several ineffectual attempts, she desisted and left her to herself, thinking that Hannah might perhaps weep when alone.

With Huntley's departure terminated the feverish dread of new and less easily withstood appeals which had hitherto kept Hannah in hourly alarm; but the sinking of mind which ensued was scarcely less trying. Her strength, which had been equal to the sacrifice, gave way now that it was over, and it was fortunate for her constancy that Huntley knew not the self-abandonment, the relenting, and the regret, which followed his departure, lest he should have returned to find her faultering heart an easy victory. She sank into a listless dejection, which shrank from sympathy and loathed society and employment.

Rosina was surprised. She had not believed Hannah possessed of sufficient energy to resign Huntley,—and she had concluded that her self-command and equanimity would have better secured her from the effects of the trial. She could not understand the union of strength and weakness in the same quiet character.

Mrs. Wellford was much alarmed when she found that Hannah's melancholy settled into a habit, instead of yielding to time and reason. She endeavoured to rouse her by direct and indirect methods, but her languor of mind seemed

incurable. A disposition not liable to common weaknesses was not amenable to common remedies. If her mother ventured to throw a little reproach into her remonstrances, she wept agonizingly, but the pain was unaccompanied by profit. Rosina's cheerfulness, which indeed had lately become forced, scarcely excited a smile; and of Mr. Russell she seemed to have a horror. She even peevishly broke off the subject when he was named. Disease must have obtained a fearful hold when Hannah's temper failed.

The autumn was now nearly over, and miry ways, sullen skies, and chilling winds, bespoke the presence of November. Dreary as was the outward face of things, no less dreary were the feelings of the inhabitants of the White Cottage. Winter, indeed, is dark and unlovely, yet it had generally been welcomed with cheerfulness; Summerfield was not more gloomy, more leafless, or more clouded than usual at the fall of the year. What then made it appear so changed? Passion had been there. Tranquillity ceases to be valued when we have recently known delight; it is only after the turbulence of grief, that it can be again appreciated. The last six months had been a pe-

riod of unceasing excitement; and now that the little circle once more closed round its own hearth, the charm of domestic privacy was not immediately felt. There was much more to think of with regret, in the past, than to enjoy in the present, or hope for in the future. Mrs. Wellford, indeed, as she made up the evening blaze, could exclaim, "How long it is since we have enjoyed a nice, uninterrupted winter evening!" but only faint smiles rose on the lips of her daughters; and when she gazed on the fading countenance of Hannah, and considered that more caution on her own part might have averted the ruin of her happiness, her individual enjoyment of long quiet evenings might be doubted.

Rosina was now forced to take her daily walks without a companion, for Hannah almost invariably excused herself on the plea of a head-ache or the cold, though in reality on account of her disinclination to any bodily or mental exertion. Rosina's spirits, therefore, which depended not a little on the excitement of a companion, became almost as cheerless as her sister's; and nothing that she saw in her walks had much tendency to enliven them. The downs reminded her of sketch-

ing excursions with Mr. Huntley; the lanes, of Lewis Pennington. She wearied herself with idle conjectures as to the future, and considered how lonely the world would be to her if she should lose Hannah. In one of these solitary walks, she met Mr. Russell, whom she had seldom seen lately. He was struck, on her approach, by the deep seriousness of a countenance which he had been accustomed to connect only with smiles.

"What, all alone, Rosina?" said he.

"Hannah seldom leaves home now," said Rosina dejectedly.

"Indeed! I am surprised,—I am sorry to hear that!—Is not she well?"

"I think," said Rosina, averting her brimming eyes, "that she is dying."

"Dying, Rosina! She *must* not die—" exclaimed he with sudden energy. "No! she has too much strength of mind to fall a prey to regret!"

"I thought so once," said Rosina, "but none of us understood her."

"She will not die," repeated Mr. Russell, with deep feeling,—"Heaven will give her strength to perfect her sacrifice. It was voluntary; she can-

not repent it. You are low spirited, Rosina—you are an anxious and affectionate sister, and too prone to take alarm. This must not be. Trust to time and to Hannah's good sense. They will bring her cure."

"I hope so," sighed Rosina, "but I am almost tired of hoping."

"Let no one tire of hope.—It is often at the moment we are ready to abandon it, that help is at hand. Are you not beginning to look forward to the return of your younger brother?"

"Yes, he will leave school in a fortnight, and Mr. Smith has promised to take him into his office."

"You will henceforward see a great deal of him, no doubt. His society will make a pleasant change for you. And Matthew will spend his Christmas with you, will not he? Does not Hannah look forward with pleasure to seeing her brothers?"

"Yes, but it does not occupy her thoughts so much as I could wish."

"Never mind; they *will* occupy her thoughts when they come. It will make a change for her. At present you have too little change for a sick

mind. If you had some cheerful, bustling aunt or cousin, now, to whom you could send her, or if Mr. and Mrs. Good were going to spend their Christmas with their Somersetshire friends, and would take her with them, unpalatable as the remedy might be, I have no doubt it would be effectual. But as this is out of the question, endeavour to amuse her mind as much as you can. Read entertaining and soothing books; ask her assistance in trifling employments, which she will be too goodnatured to refuse; try to make her visit her favourite cottagers: there is nothing like the sight of others' distresses to heal our own."

"Will you come in?" said Rosina, as they reached the gate.

"No, not now, I thank you. Perhaps I may look in on you in the evening."

Mr. Russell kept his word. He brought some books which he thought might please Hannah.

"Here is a letter which perhaps you may like to see," said he to Mrs. Wellford in the course of the evening.

She thanked him, and after reading a few lines, put it into her work-bag, saying that if he was not

in a hurry for it, she would take another opportunity of reading it.

"And have you no curiosity, Hannah, to know what discoveries have lately been made in Africa?" said Mr. Russell, taking up one of the books which he had brought.

"I dare say we shall find them very interesting," replied she languidly.

"Shall I give you a sample of them?" And with encouragement from two of the party, he began to read aloud. Hannah's attention was fixed for some time; at length she became abstracted, and Mr. Russell startled her from a reverie by asking rather a puzzling question respecting the Niger. She hastily gave an incorrect reply, and was cheated into a defence of what she soon found must be wrong, and then into an explanation. Mr. Russell was so unusually stupid that reference to an atlas was necessary, and then he had so many "hows" and "whys" still left, that Hannah was obliged to pursue the argument. At length she looked wearied, and he quietly resumed his reading.

"Henry Neale tells me you never go to see him now," said Mr. Russell closing his book.

"I have not felt quite equal to the exertion lately," said Hannah hesitatingly.

"Not equal to your duty?—Excuse me for so rude a speech; I did not mean to make you start; but is it not a duty in certain cases to fulfil expectations when we have raised them?—This poor boy might have gone on cutting cork models with his pocket-knife and plaiting straw contentedly, if he had never known the greater pleasure of frequent visits from a compassionate young lady, whose instruction gave him more refined tastes than he would otherwise have acquired. Poor Henry told me, that though he knew he had no right to your kindness, he missed it very much. By the by, there was dame Curtis—she told me you had forgotten your promise about some muffatees or kittycuffs, and that she did not like to remind you of them; but I told her I was used to making disagreeable speeches and that I would jog your memory."

"I had forgotten them," said Hannah, searching in her basket, "but she shall have them in two or three days."

"May I tell her so, if I see her?"

"If you please."

"Very well. Remember, I have a great consideration for my character as a man of veracity."

"You seem to think me very idle," said Hannah, faintly smiling.

"What a good text this would make! I should like to preach on it," said Mr. Russell, turning over the leaves of a book. "'Temptation is the opportunity of virtue.' Whose is it, Rosina? I give you three guesses."

"Addison's?"

"Oh no!"

"Dr. Johnson's?"

"No."

"Miss Frances Reynolds's?"

"Miss Frances Reynolds? I never heard of her. The sister of Sir Joshua?"

"Yes; Dr. Johnson said her aphorisms were worthy of Locke or Pascal."

"I should like to see them. No, this is by old Jeremy Taylor. 'Temptation is the opportunity of virtue.' I hope you feel its beauty."

"And how would you preach on it? Firstly,

on the temptation, secondly on the opportunity, and thirdly on the virtue?"

"No, that would be a most unscholastic division. I would shew that temptations are common to all; that we should not run into them, vainly trusting in our own strength, when every day and night we pray to be delivered from them; but that when they come, *unsought*, we may be sure that they are such as we can overcome. Then I would say a word or two on different kinds of temptation,—temptation to amusement; such as young people are too apt to fall into,—temptation to trust in our own strength, and our own genius, the besetting error of many gifted characters—temptation to give up *hope*, which some, even young and sanguine, will experience,—temptation to indulge in luxury and creature comforts, like many a rich old bachelor,—temptation to uncharitableness, which is sometimes laid to the charge of old maids,—and temptation to sink under griefs, in the mistaken idea that useless melancholy hurts no one but ourselves, and that we have a right to indulge in it—a most dangerous belief, even if the first supposition were true, which it never is."

"A very good sermon, no doubt," said Hannah colouring.

At night, when Hannah went to bed, her mother entered her room and conversed with her on different subjects, while Rosina was sitting up to finish the narrative which Mr. Russell had been reading. Hannah had appeared more depressed than usual throughout the day, and Mrs. Wellford did not like leaving her to herself.

"My dear mother," said she with a faint smile, on perceiving her solicitude, "you need not be alarmed—I am quite well. I am merely in low spirits."

"But when the low spirits prevail day after day, can I *help* being alarmed? My dear Hannah, if the thought of alarming me *really* distresses you, do try for my sake to arouse your mind—"

"It feels completely deadened, mother—Time only can bring its cure—"

"No, my love, I think it might be accelerated by a little exertion. I never expected to see Hannah surrender herself to useless regret without an effort."

"Ah mother," said Hannah with emotion, "regret is bitter, but what is it to compunction?"

"Compunction, my dear! Surely you cannot feel that?"

"Yes," said she, bursting into tears, "his last words were, that mine would be the blame, into whatever excesses disappointment might hurry him! They have rung in my ears ever since! Only think what responsibility I may have incurred—think what I might have saved him from; and all for my selfish interest—*not* my happiness!"

"My dear Hannah, is this the source of your unhappiness? I am glad you have confided it to me. Think no more of it; none of Mr. Huntley's errors will be attributable to you. There is no probability that his disappointment will plunge him into despair; the grief of impetuous characters is that which soonest abates—it is far less difficult to cure than your silent despondency. And even if it leaves a serious impression behind, it will most likely be such as will have a beneficial influence on his character."

"If I could think so!—But unfortunately all is conjecture. If I could but hear from some one how he looks, how he speaks—*any* news almost would be preferable to none. For good news I could be thankful; and if he had plunged into

new and worse follies, I could give one long sigh and all would be over!"

"What do you mean, my love, by all would be over?"

"I think,—yes, I think his power over me would cease. I could not esteem him."

"To set you at ease," said Mrs. Wellford, "I can shew you how Mr. Huntley bears his disappointment." And she produced the letter which Mr. Russell had given her. Hannah hastily glanced over it till she came to the following passage:

"I heard of Huntley's return, from Hallet, who having seen him by chance, called at his lodgings, but found that he had given orders to be denied. This whim, however, only lasted two or three days, since which he has again become *one of us*, attends lectures, auctions, the theatres, and is as gay a companion as ever. There seems to me, however, a little recklessness in all this, to which you, perhaps, could furnish the key if you would. Old Mrs. Huntley is very ill. I understand her son has been to see her. If she dies, what will become of that poor girl, her daughter? Huntley will do what he must, but I fear, not what he should."

Hannah wept. It was not such an account as she had wished for; and she had some difficulty in believing herself forgotten so soon. But the influence of Mr. Frank Russel's letter, on the whole, was salutary.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOUSE-BREAKING.

HANNAH's thoughts were diverted from their habitual channel, by—a fright. Farmer Holland, in one night, lost all his turkeys; and several burglaries which had been committed at Heeley, were still the talk and terror of the county, when Mr. Good's house was broken open. This would have been a notable occasion for the young Mr. Bacon's distinguishing himself in the eyes of all Summerfield; unfortunately, the young gentleman either slept or affected to sleep so soundly, that Mr. Good, who had been awakened by noises below, found he was more likely to disturb the thieves than his hopeful pupil. He therefore called up his man servant, whose ears or courage proved more alert, and they stole down stairs armed with an old fowling-piece, and a poker.

The burglars, three in number, were alarmed, and fled through an open door, unhurt by the fowling-piece which Mr. Good fired after them. John, however, came up with the last of the party, in time to have a scuffle, in which he was worsted; and the rogues escaped with a tea-pot and six silver spoons. The next day, all Summerfield was in commotion: John, with several stars of strapping plaster on his face, enjoyed the reputation of a hero, and repeated his story to twelve several auditors, each of whom, no doubt, carried it to twelve more. Constables were on the look out, footsteps traced and measured, bolts and bars repaired, blunderbusses and horse pistols loaded; Mrs. Good condoled with, Mr. Good inquired after, and Mr. Bacon congratulated. Rosina, who was one of the first to hear the particulars from Fanny Good, ran home in ecstasy with so exciting a piece of intelligence, and was disappointed at Hannah's being only half frightened enough. Her mother and Betty, however, displayed very gratifying alarm, and after talking of nothing else the whole day, and agreeing that there was nothing in their house to tempt burglars, they went to bed with more apprehen-

sions than they liked to own. Rosina insisted on Hannah's telling her, whether in any, the greatest emergency in the world, she thought she could have courage, if necessary, to fire a gun. Hannah thought she could, if she were quite certain of its not killing anybody. Rosina was certain *she* could not, hoped she never should be tried, cowered at the bare possibility, fell asleep with her thoughts still full of gunpowder, and muttered something in her slumber that sounded like "pull the trigger." Hannah, whose nights were now very wakeful, was aroused a few hours before dawn by the distant bark of Rosina's little dog, which was shut up in the kitchen. She listened,—heard it again,—and with rather an uncomfortable feeling, arose and groped her way to the window. It was a cold but not a dark night—she opened the lattice, looked out, and could see no one. Just as she was on the point of satisfying herself that her apprehensions were groundless, a voice immediately beneath her window muttered, "If they clack, we must cut their throats, that's all."

"What are you about, Hannah? Is the window open?" said Rosina, drowsily.

"Hush," said Hannah, softly, "there are some men beneath our window."

"Men beneath our window! Good heavens!" cried Rosina, starting up and running to open the door, "we are locked in!"

"No, if you remember, you locked the door last night, yourself."

"At any rate, it will not open: I must have injured the lock. How stupid, when I might have considered that the first thing we should do, on any alarm, would be to open the door. This comes of over apprehension! Really, it will not open. Shall we call out to mamma?"

"No, if we cannot open the door *with* the key, we may be certain that she could not, without it."

"Shall I ring the bell, then?"

"Betty will not hear it, as she is up stairs."

"But don't you see that the thieves will! It may alarm them." And Rosina rang the bell with such energy as to break the wire.

"What a horrible situation we are in!" she ejaculated. "Are they still under the window?"

"No, every thing seems quiet. Hark, there is a noise in the poultry house."

"Oh, my poor Gallinas!" cried Rosina. "Well,

if they will content themselves with them, we may be very thankful."

"Yes, and that explains what I heard them say."

"What?"

"'If they clack, we must cut their throats.'"

"Oh, Hannah! did they really say so, and have you, all this time, been believing that they meant to cut *our* throats?"

"I have been very much alarmed, but it would have been of no use, you know, to have screamed. I should neither have liked to go down stairs with mamma, nor for her to go down without me. If they are house-breakers, it is better that they should think us asleep, for we could make no defence."

"It is really a tempting of Providence, for us to live in this way, without a guard."

"We have been very safe, hitherto."

They continued watching at the window for some time; and at length, every thing remaining quiet, crept to bed, shivering as much with cold as fear. They slept no more, and were most thankful when the morning dimly dawned. Hannah's first care, on arising, was to endeavour to

open the door, which with considerable difficulty she effected. Rosina was no sooner dressed than she ran down to the chicken house. The Gallinas were gone!

Mrs. Wellford was alarmed, though not so much as her daughters had been. She attributed the theft to the gipsies on Heeley Common, who were suspected of having stolen Miss Holland's turkeys. Rosina's fright was perhaps counterbalanced by the pleasure of talking of it. She dwelt on it to Mrs. Good, Lady Worral, and Mrs. Greenway, and declared she would not live that night over again for any thing that could be given her. And yet, after all, when the auxiliaries of darkness and terror were taken away, she was mortified to reflect, that there was nothing very romantic in a hen-roost being robbed, and two young ladies having locked themselves into their room. But the loss of the Gallinas had not been such an unqualified misfortune as was at first supposed. Hannah had been roused from her torpor, and was prevented from relapsing into it, by the change brought in the cheerful train of Christmas. Harry, after a twelvemonth's absence, (for he had spent his summer holidays with a schoolfellow,) returned to his family, a fine, spi-

rited, handsome boy of sixteen, full of frankness and gaiety. It had been his desire to go to sea, but he had ceded to his mother's wish, and was now looking forward to a desk and seat in an attorney's office, with as much cheerfulness as if it had always been the object of his ambition. The Miss Greenways likewise returned to their happy parents, the young Goods arrived from school, Dr. Black was expected at the vicarage, the Browns at the Grange, and Christmas eve brought down the joyful Matthew. He was delighted to see his mother, his sisters, and his brother; he looked healthy and happy; how then could Hannah be melancholy during his short visit? He was impatient to call on the Goods; escorted the Miss Greenways to their door after church; then brought home his friend Sam; and met every one with a smile and an outstretched hand. But if Summerfield were as dear to him as ever, it no longer appeared to him a place of paramount importance. It looked amazingly small; it was nothing to London! Matthew had a great deal to relate; he had found some pleasant acquaintance, had been several times to the theatres, and could describe the public buildings. Hannah smiled, and Rosina applauded when he told how "*we*

do this and that in town," and declared that Harry would be a good looking fellow if he had a better tailor. The Miss Greenways' bonnets, he observed, were of the fashionable colour; and he bade Rosina remark that Anne Greenway wore large curls and few of them, which was quite *comme il faut*. He had leisure for hearing, as well as for narrating; and during one of his walks with Rosina, begged her to tell him the whole affair of Huntley's illness, rejection, and departure. The recital filled him with concern, in spite of his former persuasion that Huntley was unworthy of Hannah: he had some difficulty, however, in believing that his sister had suffered so severely as Rosina described. He perceived she was thinner, but noticed no alteration of manner. He had yet to learn how much grief there is which passes shew.

Mrs. Good gave a little dance; Mrs. Greenway did the same, on which occasion, Twelfth-cake was cut; and it was looked upon as very droll that Anne Greenway should draw Beatrice, and Matthew Benedict; for Matthew knew nearly all his speeches by heart, and was able to support his character.

The " festivities of the season" enlivened Sum-

merfield for a fortnight, and then every body returned to business and every thing to its usual quiet course. Harry went to Heeley; he was in future to spend only his Sundays at home—Matthew went—the Browns went—and Mr. Russell went! He had long promised a visit to an old uncle and aunt. Every one missed him, especially when his pulpit was filled on Sunday, by a pert young curate from Heeley. Rosina talked most of the difference, and Hannah felt it most. Summerfield seemed to have a right to Mr. Russell's perpetual presence. The church vane was blown down while he was away; which many thought might not have happened if he had been at home. When he returned, it was with his promised guest, Dr. Black. Any addition to society, Rosina thought, was better than none, yet the doctor's manners seemed more uncouth than ever. He was a good foil certainly, to Mr. Russell, who had as much the advantage over him in youth and good looks as Lewis Pennington had over Mr. Russell. Hannah was daily acquiring more even spirits, and exerting more energy; Harry was frequently at the White Cottage, and always welcome; Mr. Russell and Dr. Black occasionally dropped in,

and the evenings, now past their longest, were sometimes very cheerful. Dr. Black was passionately fond of music; he liked Rosina's voice, and would sit in rapturous reverie while she had the complaisance to continue singing song after song without requiring entreaty or applause. His long luxurious sigh at the end was reward enough, and she could not help relenting so far as to own that "certainly the man had a soul." Mr. Russell had a silent triumph in seeing the *unconquerable* antipathy conquered; and could break off his dialogue with Hannah and her mother to give a pleased look at the rugged scholar coiled up with his elbow on the piano and his back to the songstress, making a little solitude to himself with the palm of his immense hand, and unconsciously beating time, while Rosina was singing better than if she had had no auditor, or than if the auditor had been one of whom she had more dread. Dr. Black, when drawn out, could not only unfold the learning of the Greeks, and dwell on the characteristic genius of tongues Syriac, Chaldaic, Persic, Hindostanee, and Chinese; could not only illustrate the wisdom of Confucius, and unfold the mysteries of Brahma; but recite English poetry new and old, and draw similes from every object that caught his attention.

His strange manner once surmounted, his talents dazzled Rosina more than Hannah. She loved what was uncommon, vast, and original. "You need not despair of seeing me all you wish me to be, some day," said she one morning to Mr. Russell, "for I have actually learnt to admire Dr. Black."

"You *are* nearly all I can wish you to be," replied Mr. Russell with pleasure.

He could have desired that it had been Hannah who had learnt to appreciate his gifted friend. Her delicate cheek, hinting of consumption, filled him with apprehension; and in the uncomplaining patience which had succeeded her melancholy, he saw so much cause for uneasiness, as to be anxious that something should divert her thoughts altogether from the dangerous channel which it was evident they still too often occupied. Circumstances were, indeed, preparing a change for her, but not such a change as Mr. Russell at first found very palatable.

END OF VOL. II.

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